

Al Hilal SC claimed a valuable away point after holding Mamelodi Sundowns to a thrilling 2-2 draw in a CAF Champions League Group C clash at Loftus Versfeld on Friday night.

The visitors struck early, opening the scoring inside the first 15 minutes after a deflected ball sailed over the Sundowns defence, catching the hosts off guard. Sundowns responded well and were back on level terms just six minutes later.

Arthur Sales showed strength and composure to bring down a long pass from Marcelo Allende before calmly finishing from close range, the ball again taking a slight deflection on its way past Al Hilal goalkeeper Farid Ouédraogo.

The teams went into the break level, but Sundowns returned with greater intensity after halftime. Head coach Miguel Cardoso made an immediate change, introducing Brayan León for Lebo Mothiba as the hosts looked to take control of the game.

That pressure finally paid off in the 64th minute. Teboho Mokoena produced a moment of brilliance, unleashing a superb long-range strike from outside the box that flew into the top corner following a well-worked set piece.

Sundowns' lead, however, was short-lived. Seven minutes later, Abdelrazig Omer struck again for Al Hilal. Poor defensive organisation gave the forward space inside the area, and he made no mistake, firing a powerful low shot past the goalkeeper to complete his brace.

The visitors were reduced to 10 men in the 84th minute when Emmanuel Flomo was shown a straight red card for a dangerous elbow on Khuliso Mudau. Sundowns pushed hard for a late winner, piling pressure on the Al Hilal defence, but the Sudanese side stood firm to preserve the draw and extend their unbeaten run in the group.

The result leaves Sundowns top of Group C on five points after three matches, level with Al Hilal but ahead on goal difference. Al Hilal sit second, also on five points, while Saint-Éloi Lupopo and MC Alger remain winless ahead of their meeting on Sunday.

The two sides will face again in the return fixture in Kigali on January 31, 20226 as the race for qualification continues to intensify.