

Bad tempered Edinburgh Derby ends in stalemate



Thursday's Edinburgh derby at Tynecastle ended in stalemate with neither side able to grab a decisive goal, but the dour 90 minutes will be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

In an ill-tempered game, Hearts fans were angry with referee Willie Collum for failing to show early yellow cards to Hibs' Tim Clancy for a foul on Kevin McHattie, and Eoin Doyle for a late challenge on keeper Jamie McDonald.

They were further incensed when he did not award a penalty when Hibs' skipper James McPake appeared to impede Scott Robinson in the box.

Hibs' players, staff and supporters were furious that no action was taken against Ryan Stevenson for a two footed lunge on McPake which saw the Northern Ireland international suffer a gashed shin. On this occasion however Collum did not see any infringement and awarded a throw in, however television replays will almost certainly see the competitive midfielder banned retrospectively.

Throughout the game, coins and other missiles intermittently rained down on both sets of players, whilst both sets of fans traded insults, including offensive, sectarian and homophobic chants.

Midway through the second half, a Hibs fan in the Roseburn Stand taunted Jamie McDonald by refusing to give him the ball which had gone out of play for a goal kick. As he was doing so, a young ball-boy managed to take the ball from him and throw it to the keeper, however on his way back to his seat a number of Hibs' fans spat into the ball-boy's face.

Stewards and Police quickly responded and a male was escorted him from the ground, despite an effort by other fans to prevent his removal, which started a chant from the Wheatfield Stand of 'Are you Celtic in disguise?' referring to the behaviour of Celtic fans at Dens Park last week.

At that point, a smoke bomb exploded in the Hibs' end, and on-line forums suggest that it was thrown from Section G of the Wheatfield Stand, landing next to a small child, which, if proved could result in sanctions against the already troubled Gorgie club. Some Hearts fans however suggest that the device was set off by Hibs supporters.

Following the game, the ball-boy said on Twitter: "I was just running past and then like two or three of them spat at me and I stopped and wiped it off."

Sometime later, a Hibs supporter messaged the boy via Twitter to say: "Am sorry for what I done, I know I shouldn't of done it but I never thought at the time, just wanted to say am sorry."

He added: "Feel so sorry for the ballboy would like to give all my apology, hope you don't stop being a ball-boy because of people like me."

The supporter has since closed down his Facebook account after receiving dozens of messages decrying his behaviour, but he added later on Twitter: "Everyone saying it was me when everyone was doing it."

The act was also condemned by players on both sides. Hearts player Jamie Hamill said: "The fan who spat on the ball-boy should never be allowed at any ground ever I would rather someone punched me than spit on me."

Ryan McGowan, who missed the game due to transfer speculation said: "Disgraceful behaviour by ONE Hibs fan tonight's spitting on a ball boy! Although thought both sets of fans

were great tonight.

James McPake said: Didn't know about the ball boy. That's a shambles and deserved to be threw out if true.

Leigh Griffiths said: "The wee boy didn't deserve to be spat on. To the fan that spat on the boy you should be ashamed of yourself

A police spokesperson said: "We can confirm that a 16-year-old has been arrested last night in relation to this incident."

With feelings still running high on both sides, Hibs star Ryan McGivern hit out at Stevenson's tackle on McPake. He said: "I think it was a disgusting tackle, I've seen it back again as well. The referee said both players were going for the ball. James is going from a different angle with a slide tackle.

"Stevenson has had a little look and he knows he is going to try and 'do' him. The referee has had a wee bit of stinker there for letting that one go. The ref had a good game tonight but not to see that one was pretty poor.

"For me, it was a red card tackle. James isn't going to make a fuss about nothing; he's not that kind of guy. Straight away, he said to the ref it was a two-footed lunge. I think everyone saw that it was, apart from the ref. James has got a nasty cut on his leg."

Hibs boss Pat Fenlon echoed McGivern's comments. He said "I've just watched it. It's a shocking tackle, but you can't be critical of the referee. I thought he refereed the game very well tonight. I've seen the tackle and it's a very, very poor tackle. He's left the ground, and he's had a look first before he's left the ground. But it happens and you just have to take it on the chin sometimes.

"He is not badly hurt. He has a bad gash, James, but he'll get over it. There could have been a bit of damage there, but he's

not too bad.”

Hearts boss John McGlynn said. “I haven’t seen it again. It’s a derby game, it’s competitive. In derby games four or five years ago that wouldn’t have been an issue.” The manager later annoyed Hibs fans with his after match comments to BBC Scotland’s Chick Young when he said: “They’ve just beaten Celtic and thought they were league champions. That’s two games and they’ve scored one flukey goal against us.”

The game itself was a hard fought encounter with neither side playing the quality of football they are capable of. Hearts dominated possession with Driver, Stevenson, Holt, Zaliukas and Sutton all missing good chances, whilst Doyle and Griffiths both went close for Hibs.

Hibs go into the mid-season break six points ahead of Hearts, and have a Scottish Cup tie against Aberdeen to look forward to, whilst Hearts have a League Cup semi-final against on-form Inverness Caledonian Thistle later this month.

Transfer speculation surrounds both sides, with Hearts likely to see several high earners leaving the club, whilst Hibs are desperate to retain the services of their on-loan trio Leigh Griffiths, Ryan McGivern and Jorge Claros.