

Hibernian 1 Nottingham Forest

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Despite an impressive performance in the Algarve heat, Hibs narrowly lost to Championship club Nottingham Forrest last night at the Estadio Municipal VRSA, in a pre-season friendly.

Manager Pat Fenlon selected a more experienced side in the second game of the tour, with Ben Williams and James McPake returning to the starting XI. New signings Owain Tudur Jones and Liam Craig started in midfield alongside Tom Taiwo and Alex Harris. Teenage strikers Danny Handling and Ross Caldwell began up front.

An early Craig effort was blocked just outside the box and Forest's Dan Harding over hit a cross from the left as both teams cancelled each other out in the warm conditions.

Midway through the first half Craig went close with a low shot which was saved by Forest keeper Dimitar Evtimov following clever wing play from Alex Harris.

A few minutes later, Forest took the lead when referee Sergio Piscaretta penalised Lewis Stevenson for a foul on Dexter Blackstock inside the area, and the Forest striker smashed the resultant penalty into the roof of the net past Williams.

Hibs fought back and played some high tempo football with Ryan McGivern going close with a powerful left-footed shot which flew narrowly wide of the post just before the break.

On the stroke of half-time another right wing cross from the Harris was met by Handling, but his glancing header was deflected wide of the post.

Hibs continued to press in the second half and Craig went

close before Williams produced a superb save to prevent Forest from doubling their advantage.

Hibs then equalised after a great through ball from Handling found Tudur Jones beat Forest keeper Khaled Alrashidi with a superb finish.

A few minutes later, Forest regained their lead when Ishmael Miller beat Williams from inside the box.

Hibs almost grabbed an equaliser in the final minute when substitute Paul Cairney cleverly nut-megged his marker on the left-hand side before sending in a dangerous cross but the danger was cleared and the English side held on for the win.

One pleasing aspect however was the fact that during the game, Hibs fielded eight players under the age of 21.

Hibs will find out on Thursday whether they will face Malmo or Drogheda United in the second qualifying round of the Europa League, with the tie finely balanced after the first leg in Ireland.

On a disturbing note however, play was held up due to crowd trouble, and Hibs later issued the following statement on the club's official website.

"The club was saddened to note that an altercation took place at the Estadio Municipal VRSA during the first half. The incident was quickly dealt with by the authorities and the rest of the match passed without incident. Hibernian Football Club cannot condone any form of anti-social behaviour or intolerance between rival groups."

Hibs: Williams, Stevenson, McPake, Hanlon, McGivern, Harris, Taiwo, Tudur Jones, Craig, Handling, Caldwell. Subs: Murdoch, Donaldson (for Hanlon), Forster (for McPake), Cairney (for Harris), Stanton (for Craig), Horribine (for Caldwell), Gold (for Taiwo), Mullen (for McGivern).