

Hibs 0-0 Ross County – Stalemate at Easter Road



Hibs poor run of results against Ross County continued today at Easter Road as the clubs fought out a goalless draw. Amazingly the Easter Road side have yet to record a competitive victory over the County, losing all three league games last term, adding to the cup defeat in 2010 in Dingwall after a home draw.

Whilst Hibs dominated possession today, in the end they were fortunate to keep a point as Ross County missed several good chances.

Manager Pat Fenlon kept faith with the same starting XI that won last weekend at Kilmarnock which meant new signing Paul Heffernan had to be content with a place on the substitutes' bench.

French winger Abdellah Zoubir watched the game from the West Stand, alongside injured team-mates Paul Cairney and Tim Clancy.

A minute's applause took place ahead of the game in memory of former striker Gerry Barker whose goal scoring performances lit up the stadium 50 years ago.

The Staggies should have taken the lead in the 11th minute when Luckasse's shot struck Ben Williams's legs before Kovacevic's shot from the edge of the box crashed off the post.

Eight minutes later Luckassen, picked out the run of Rocco Quinn who somehow managed to miss the target from point-blank range to the relief of the Hibs fans in the crowd.

Graham Carey then forced a save from Williams before Hibs started to dominate possession without troubling Brown.

With half time approaching, a powerful drive from Liam Craig was deflected wide by Brian McLean then a Ryan McGivern cross was met by James Collins who glanced a superb header off the base of Mark Brown's post.

In the second half Ben Gordon was booked for a rash tackle on Danny Handling just outside the box, and Brown did well to hold Liam Craig's powerful free kick,

On 65 minutes Handling's cut-back found Collins who volleyed over eight yards, then a few minutes later Carey should have opened the scoring after evading a number of tackles inside the box, but the Irishman shot wide with the goal gaping when it looked easier to score.

Pat Fenlon made three substitutions, starting with Ross Caldwell replacing Rowan Vine, then Danny Handling and James Collins, made way for new signing Paul Heffernan and Sammy Stanton as Hibs presses for the winner.

In the end however, the highlanders were happy to settle for a point, although the home fans made their feelings known at the final whistle.

After the final whistle, Pat Fenlon said: "We've got to be more positive and enjoy playing here. The game didn't really get going. There was no real tempo to the game, lots of stops for fouls and free kicks. I suppose it's up to us to do that but they made it difficult for us.

"We probably only had one good chance when James hit the post. Some of the build-up play was good but when we get into the top end of the pitch we've got to be more positive and a little quicker with our movement and passing.

"Paul Heffernan will give us something different His link-up

play is decent. You saw that in the small time he was on. He put some decent balls in and got it wide. He'll be a good addition; he has a good record of goal-scoring in this league."

Former Hibs assistant manager Derek Adam who is now in charge of Ross County said: "We had better opportunities and should have won the match. Over the 90 minutes we were the better side and no-one could argue with that. Overall it was a good performance going into the international break."

James Collins accepted that he had found goals hard to come by since his move to Easter Road from Swindon, but insists that he will continue to work hard; "At the moment it's not going for me or the lads in front of goals, but we need to keep plugging away next week back in training ahead of the St Johnstone game. I try not to beat myself up but I would be lying if I said I didn't think about it."

Hibs: Williams, McGivern, Hanlon, Nelson, Vine (Caldwell 67'), Craig, Collins (Heffernan 82'), Stevenson, Tudur Jones, Handling (Stanton 82'), Taiwo. Substitutes not used: Murdoch, Forster, Maybury, Robertson.

Ross County: Brown, Kovacevic, Gordon, Kettlewell, Sproule (Maatsen 86'), Brittain, Quinn (de Leeuw 53'), Munro, Luckassen, McLean, Carey. Substitutes not used: Fraser, Boyd, Micic, Mustafi, Ross.

Referee: Iain Brines.

Attendance 9569