

ICT 3-0 Hibs: Six game unbeaten run ends in Inverness



Hibs' undefeated run of six games came to an abrupt end yesterday at the Tulloch Caledonian Stadium in Inverness, as table topping Caley Thistle continued their impressive start to the season with a comfortable 3-0 win.

Pat Fenlon made three changes from the team that beat Stranraer in midweek, with Rowan Vine, Abdellah Zoubir and Alan Maybury making way for Kevin Thomson, Paul Heffernan and Ryan McGivern. This meant that once again, versatile Lewis Stevenson moved from left back to right back.

Hibs took the field wearing their black strip and received a great welcome from the 715 fans who had made the long journey north, showing once again that the supporters will turn out in significant numbers for a winning team.

The Easter Road men started well with several early corners before Inverness took an early lead when Graeme Shinnie's cross was spilled by Ben Williams and Billy McKay reacted fastest to force the ball into the net.

Terry Butcher's men almost grabbed a second shortly after when James Vincent set McKay away, only for the Northern Irishman's shot to end up wide of Williams' far post, whilst Hibs' best chance of the first half came when Liam Craig flick on found Paul Heffernan but his shot flashed wide of Brill's goal.

Tuesday's hat-trick hero Craig then attempted a long range effort and Draper volleyed wide just before the break.

Inverness started the second half brightly and nearly

capitalised on a slip from Kevin Thomson, but Nick Ross' pass was too strong for Aaron Doran and a grateful Ben Williams collected the ball.

Tom Taiwo had a decent chance but blasted his shot over the bar before McKay, who had caused the Hibs' defence problems all day should have doubled Caley's advantage, but the normally clinical international striker's powerful effort went past the post.

Inverness grabbed a second goal in the 59th minute when David Raven set Doran away and his cross was headed back across goal by Greenhalgh where the ball broke for captain Foran to smash the ball high into the net.

A mistake by Gary Warren in the Inverness defence almost gave Hibs a lifeline when he bulleted a header back to his goalkeeper David Brill who was forced into an instinctive save.

Two minutes later McKay grabbed his second to end the game as a contest, curling a shot across goal beyond Williams after being first to react when the ball rebounded off the Hibs' crossbar.

McKay twice came close with a header from a Greenhalgh cross then minutes after his goal-bound effort was blocked by Paul Hanlon to prevent his hat-trick.

Liam Craig almost pulled one back but his shot from a Heffernan cut back flew over the bar.

Inverness almost grabbed a fourth in the 72th minute when Raven's floated cross to the back post rebounded off the crossbar.

Hanlon then did well to block a Doran shot after Greenhalgh had cut the ball back from the by-line as the Highlanders finished the game top of the league, replacing Celtic.

Pat Fenlon's men remain in fifth place with 11 points from eight games.

After the game Pat Fenlon told BBC Scotland: "We've lost today for the first time in six games and to be fair we didn't deserve anything from the game. They had more chances than us and took them and we gave away a sloppy first goal. It's hard enough coming here without gifting goals away to the opposition. During the first half I didn't think there was much in the game but in the second half we just didn't turn up. We were trying to get subs on before the second and third goals but in the end it just wasn't to be."

Inverness Caledonian Thistle: Brill, Raven, Shinnie, Vincent (Greenhalgh 35'), Warren, Meekings, McKay, Draper (Agdestein 89'), Foran, Doran, Ross (Polworth 78'). Substitutes not used: Esson, Devine, Tremarco, Williams.

Hibs: Williams, McGivern, Hanlon, Nelson, Robertson, Craig, Collins, Stevenson, Taiwo (Zoubir 61'), Heffernan (Vine 68'), Thomson (Stanton 80'). Substitutes not used: Murdoch, McPake, Tudor Jones, Forster.

Referee: William Collum.

Attendance: 4,261.