

# Hibs 0-1 Hearts: Hibs fans' fury following derby defeat



Hibs' fans reacted with fury following yet another derby defeat to near neighbours Hearts in the quarter final of the League Cup at Easter Road last night. The dejected players left the field to a crescendo of boos as scarves were thrown onto the pitch after the final whistle and a number of supporters protested outside the West Stand, demanding the removal of manager Pat Fenlon.

The same supporters had been in fine voice ahead of the game in which they were expected to win comfortably, and a spirited rendition of 'Sunshine on Leith' greeted the teams.

Fenlon replaced influential forward Paul Heffernan, who was cup-tied with Rowan Vine, and Tom Taiwo took over from Abdellah Zoubir, whilst Gary Locke sprung a surprise by announcing that midfielder Ryan Stevenson who had limped off during Saturday's defeat to Kilmarnock was in the team, albeit with a heavily strapped leg.

Hibs started brightly in front of a packed Easter Road, and James Collins' powerful header crashed off the post in the 5<sup>th</sup> minute before Ryan McGivern set up a shot for Rowan Vine, which he stabbed just wide of the woodwork.

Jamie MacDonald did well to block a low drive from Robertson, then came to the rescue again seconds later with a world class save to touch Robertson's shot onto the underside of the crossbar.

It looked only a matter of time before Hibs scored as Fenlon's men dominated possession.

Gary Locke's men then took the lead against the run of play in the 33<sup>rd</sup> minute with a magnificent goal from Stevenson who lashed in an unstoppable shot from the edge of the box to the delight of the travelling supporters.

After the break, McGivern's throw-in found Collins who sliced the shot wide and the Hibs' fans started to show their disapproval with the striker who joined the club from Swindon Town in the summer for a substantial fee.

Hibs continued to press, without creating many chances, but Hearts always looked dangerous on the break and Kevin McHattie almost grabbed a second, but Ben Williams did well to hold his low drive.

Hibs should have equalised then when Vine set up Liam Craig, who found himself onside with only the Hearts' keeper to beat, but MacDonald pulled off a superb point-blank save and the danger was cleared.

With eight minutes remaining, James McPake was sent off for a reckless challenge on Callum Paterson on the edge of the box and although Hearts failed to capitalise from the resultant free-kick, they easily held on to secure a memorable win.

After the game a group of around 150 Hibs fans protested outside the West Stand, demanding the removal of Pat Fenlon and the chants could be heard during the after match press conference where the under fire manager insisted that he had no plans to resign.

When asked whether this latest defeat to Hearts was a resigning issue a defiant Fenlon said: I'm not going to answer that, we didn't win the game tonight, that's all. I thought we played really well. We were tremendous in the first half, created four or five great chances.

"Their goalkeeper has made some great saves and they've scored a great goal. We're disappointed we haven't won but I can't

fault the players for effort. If you create four or five chances in a derby game, you expect to win it.

"There's no problem with the supporters, they're right do that, right to feel angry because we've lost. I've no problem with that at all. I don't feel under pressure. I said before, when I took the job, that if I could take the team forward, I would do my best. If not, I've no problem with someone else doing that. So it's not about pressure.

"You have to give my players credit tonight. They played tremendously well and I hope you give them some credit. I thought in the first half that our performance was different class. We're just so disappointed that we didn't get anything out of the game.

"You understand the fans protesting. That's part of football. They are disappointed at losing to their big rivals and going out of the cup. You expect that. Of course I sympathise with them. They've been tremendous with me, they've been different class. I understand the frustrations."

Hearts manager Gary Locke said: "I think it is one of the best derby results ever considering the age of the team. It was a great performance apart from the first 15 minutes. We need to start taking that type of performance into the league. Hopefully we can turn our season around. They are young lads and we were always going to take knocks this season. Hopefully, we can now go from strength to strength."

A delighted Ryan Stevenson said: "With it being a derby, emotions were running high, and I felt I could play. I can imagine it will be sore again tomorrow. I was just delighted I turned and hit it and it went into top corner."

Hibs: Williams, McGivern, Stevenson, Hanlon, McPake, Robertson, Taiwo, Thomson, Craig, Vine, Collins: Subs Murdoch, Forster, Zoubir, Caldwell, Jones

Hearts: MacDonald, Hamill, McHattie, Wilson, McGowan,  
Stevenson, Robinson, Patterson, Walker. Holt, McGhee. Subs:  
Ridgers, McKay, Carrick, Tapping, Nicholson