

Hibs 0-2 Inverness Caledonian Thistle: Goalless run stretches to four games



Hibs' miserable run of form continued as two early goals from visitors Inverness saw the Easter Road side soundly beaten in a performance that would have shown Terry Butcher just exactly how much work needs to be done should he be confirmed as the next manager. Butcher took in the game from the west stand, all but confirming the rumours, but even his absence in the dugout couldn't dishearten his Inverness side who were composed, clinical and comfortable in their win.

The home side got off to a bad start when James Collins gave Graeme Shinnie a clumsy push in the box to give Inverness a penalty after just 14 minutes. Nick Ross stepped up, and despite keeper Ben Williams' prowess at saving penalties, he could only get a slight touch to it which wasn't enough to keep his side from going 1-0 down. Hibs' misery was compounded only a few minutes later as Inverness doubled their advantage with a well-worked goal involving Shinnie and Billy McKay. Shinnie threaded the ball through to the on-form striker who rounded Williams and slotted the ball home to make it 2-0.

It was a hammer blow for Hibs, and the two goal advantage meant that Inverness could control the rest of the game with ease. Despite some early shaky moments from Inverness keeper Dean Brill, who was struggling to deal with backpasses, the home side never looked capable of causing the Inverness defence any problems, and most of the attacks from the Easter Road side fizzled out before they could threaten the goal.

Inverness could have made it three when Alan Maybury slid in to block a cross, almost scoring an own-goal. Fortunately for

the home side, the ball came off the post and bobbled along the line where Williams was able to collect it.

The second half saw two changes for Hibs, with Tom Taiwo and Ryan McGivern being replaced by Abdellah Zoubir and Rowan Vine. The changes saw a brief spell in which Hibs played with more confidence, but they still failed to trouble the visitors and were restricted to shots from distance. The closest Hibs came to scoring was through Collins, whose header was cleared off the line by the impressive Shinnie, but ultimately Inverness proved too strong to break down.

Speaking after the game, caretaker manager Jimmy Nicholl said:- "For a team that haven't been taking their chances in the last two or three games, the last thing we needed was to be two down after 20 minutes, so it was always going to be difficult. All we were hoping for in the second half was to show a bit of character and a bit of commitment to see if we could turn things around. There is not much more that you can ask. They are just lacking a wee bit of belief and a bit of confidence and to be two down after 20 minutes against a good team and an organised team who go about their job properly, it was always going to be difficult."

When asked whether he thought that this would be his last game, Nicholl replied:- "God aye. I cleared my desk yesterday and took my boots in case somebody else nabs them. I expect things to happen over the weekend but until I get a phone call I'll have to be in on Monday morning."

Inverness will head back to the Highlands with all three points and an impressive performance, but it seems certain that Terry Butcher will remain at Easter Road, knowing he will have his work cut out for him at his new club.