

Celtic 1-0 Hibernian – Butcher's unbeaten run ends in Glasgow



Terry Butcher's unbeaten run as Hibs' manager came to an end today in the east end of Glasgow as the Easter Road side went down to a narrow 1-0 defeat to champions Celtic despite a brave second half performance.

Butcher made two changes to the side from last weekend's home draw against Partick Thistle with Michael Nelson returning from injury and Scott Robertson resuming his place in the middle of the park following suspension.

This meant that Jordon Forster moved to right back replacing Alan Maybury, whilst Owain Tudur Jones had to be content with a place on the bench.

The game kicked off in dreadful conditions with torrential rain and high winds causing difficulties for the player of both teams.

Despite their impressive domestic form which has seen them rise to the top of the table with impressive wins over Hearts and Motherwell, there was a disappointing crowd inside the stadium, partly due to the weather, the midweek defeat in Barcelona and the off the field problems concerning the Green Brigade section of supporters who have been in conflict with the directors.

Hibs started brightly wearing their all black away strip and Lewis Stevenson went close after five minutes, but Celtic began to dominate possession without causing Ben Williams problems.

Kris Commons' effort was blocked by Ryan McGivern before Scott Brown fired over the top from 25-yards out.

Celtic eventually took the lead in the 27th minute when Emilio Izaguirre found Teemu Pukki with a fine cut back and the striker knocked the ball into the net from close range.

Celtic almost doubled their lead with an Anthony Stokes' dipping drive which was touched over the bar by Williams.

Stokes should have done better a few minutes later but a heavy touch allowed Williams to gather the ball

Hibs came close to levelling the score before the break when Nelson headed over from close range before Robertson's well struck low drive was well saved by Fraser Forster.

Danny Handling had a great chance just after half time, but with only Forster to beat, the Hibs' youngster blasted his shot over the bar.

Forster then did well to knock Craig's effort wide of the far post before Williams produced a stunning save to deny Stokes whose shot took a wicked deflection to wrong-foot him.

Hibs were almost level a few minutes later when Craig's right foot shot beat Forster only to come back off the far post with Paul Cairney unable to turn in the rebound.

Substitute Zoubir then had a shot from the edge of the box which was comfortably saved by Forster.

The young French winger then took advantage of a Matthews mistake before evading two challenges but his shot went just wide of the goal.

With time running out, Hibs looked the more likely to score and almost did when Craig headed wide from well struck Kevin Thomson's free kick and Celtic held on to secure the points.

After the game Terry Butcher said: "The more the game went on the more I thought we were going to get an equaliser. We pushed men forward and changed the shape to a diamond and had a right go in many aspects, it's just that belief in the final third and the final ball and the shot and cross and taking the ball into the box

"I was very pleased with the players. The game plan was to frustrate and give them nothing in the first half which I thought we did.

"We got to the 20 minute mark which was great and they hadn't had a shot on target and then we make a mistake on the far side and Celtic punish us and that's the difference. A good ball inside and a good cross and Pukki's there to score the goal and that was the only shot and the only time they got one on one with our keeper Ben Williams.

"He had plenty of shots to save in the second half especially which were straight at them although a couple took deflections and he made some good saves but we restricted Celtic to long range shots but we couldn't get the equaliser ourselves."

Celtic: Forster, Izaguirre, Ambrose, Van Dijik, Brown, Commons, Ledley, Lustig (Matthews 73'), Biton, Stokes, Pukki (Samaras 57'). Substitutes not used: Zaluska, Fisher, Atajic, Henderson, Blade.

Hibernian: Williams, McGivern, Hanlon, Nelson, Robertson, Craig, Cairney (Zoubir 67'), Collins, Stevenson (Thomson 85'), Handling (Cummings 63'), Forster. Substitutes not used: Murdoch, Tudur Jones, Maybury, Caldwell.

Referee: Bobby Madden.