

Hibs' youngsters top table after 6-1 victory over Aberdeen



Hibs' Under 20s will go into the festive period as SPFL U20 League leaders after an impressive 6-1 away win against Aberdeen who had seven players with first team experience in their starting line-up.

James McDonaugh included first team squad players Alan Maybury, Tim Clancy and Abdellah Zoubir as well as the prolific Jason Cummings who has appeared from the bench in the last two first team games.

After a goalless first half, Aberdeen opened the scoring with McKenna's header adjudged to have crossed the line on 51 minutes.

Fourteen minutes later Cummings equalised despite the protestations of the home side for a hand ball.

Euan Smith gave Hibs the lead in the 70th minute with a fine strike into the top corner added a second with another long range effort.

A quick-fire double from Cummings and Zoubir extended the lead to 5-1 and Smith grabbed his hat-trick from the spot in time added on.

After the game, Head of Academy James McDonaugh said: "I think they had seven players that had played first-team football for them and good players at that, but I thought we were the better team in the first-half, it was 0-0 but we had the best chances and created the best openings.

“Then the second half started and we went a goal behind and you think ‘where did that come from?’ but what a response from the players and everybody played their part and I was delighted for them and delighted in them.”

He added: “They had Magennis, Shankland, Storey who is a Scotland player, Clark in the middle of the pitch, Cammy Smith who has played a number of games in the Premiership and Gregg Wylde. That is an exciting front six for Aberdeen and could also be a first-team front six for Aberdeen.

“But to be honest I thought that my front six were better. I thought that Sinclair’s passing was brilliant today and it was his best game for a while and it was Martin’s first start for the under-20s and he was good. Zoubir and Cummings were exciting up-front too.

“Todd and Smith were exciting on the wings – it was a really good team performance. The full-backs as well where Andy Black made sure that Wylde didn’t have a kick of the ball and Baptie made sure that Smith never had a kick of the ball.”

“Smith got his hat-trick so it stood out in terms of his goals and in the first-half he always looked dangerous. In the second-half he had come alive a wee bit more and obviously he gets his first goal.

“That was something that we had worked on in training the day before and he turned and hit it with his right foot, it was a really good goal. His second goal was left foot and into the top corner and he won’t hit a strike any sweeter and then he stepped up and scored the penalty.

“Euan is a good lad, he works hard and I’m delighted for him to get his hat-trick really, I’m chuffed for him.”

“Jason could have had the penalty and it was between him and Euan, but Euan won the battle to take it and scored it. Jason is a threat when he gets in behind and he must be a nuisance

to play against.

“I’m delighted for him again and another couple of goals to his tally and I think recently we have been free-scoring and that is 18 goals in three games now.”

“You always hit a patch where you look back at it and get a bit frustrated. Inverness, Partick and St Johnstone – we didn’t get a point from any of those three games, so to think about that and be top of the league after that is brilliant.

“They’ve played about 45 competitive games – that’s a season’s worth on its own – and we’re top at Christmas so we’ve managed that quite well.

“We keep saying that it is about player development, but part of that development is to know how to win games and be able to win games and in the last two or three weeks that has been brilliant.”

Hibernian under-20s: Dougie Horne, Andrew Black, Ryan Baptie, Scott Martin, Tim Clancy, Alan Maybury, Euan Smith, Jordan Sinclair (Jamie Beaton, 82), Jason Cummings, Abdellah Zoubir, Max Todd. Unused substitutes: Kleton Perntreou, Bob Wilson, Tom Gardiner, Lewis Allan, Neil Martyniuk, Jay Doyle.

Photograph Abdellah Zoubir by John Preece

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