

Ross County 0-1 Hibernian: Hibs end Highland Hoodoo



Hibs overcame their Highland hoodoo to book their place in the last 16 of the Scottish Cup today, thanks to a Danny Handling first half goal, despite having to play the last 20 minutes with 10 men after after Paul Cairney picked up an undeserved second yellow card for simulation.

Despite the narrow score line however, Hibs dominated throughout and deserved their ninth victory in the last eleven Scottish Cup ties.

Terry Butcher made one change to the side that drew with St Mirren last week with James Collins replacing the injured Paul Heffernan. Michael Nelson was on the bench after his recovery from a broken cheekbone.

Derek Adams kept faith with the same side that drew 2-2 with Hearts, with Richard Brittain still available with his ban yet to begin.

The win was Hibs' first ever competitive victory over the team from Dingwall and also the manager's first triumph in the town.

Over 1,000 Hibs' supporters packed into the away end and cheered throughout the game showing a new found enthusiasm for the ream, following the apathy toward the previous manager.

Ryan McGivern sent an early looping cross into the box which was expertly controlled by James Collins, who found Cairney but his cross was blocked for a corner.

Hibs were organised at the back but it was the Staggies who had in the net through former Hearts striker Gary Glen but his

effort was disallowed because of an earlier infringement.

Hibs took the lead on the half hour mark when Craig did well to win the ball just outside the box before sliding an inch perfect pass to Handling, who finished off with a clinical side-foot finish for his first goal of the season.

After the break former Hibs keeper Mark Brown did well to save a Scott Robertson effort then County fought back with Stuart Kettlewell's low shot deflected away for a corner.

Kevin Luckassen then sent a powerful header goal wards but thankfully for the Hibs' defenders, the ball cannoned off the post before being cleared away.

Hibs then should have had a penalty when Cairney weaved his way past three defenders before being brought down by Brown but unbelievably the referee issued a second yellow card to the former Partick Thistle player for simulation, a decision that caused fury amongst the travelling supporters behind the goal.

Collins then found Stevenson on the edge of the box, but his well struck shot deflected off Boyd and flew inches over the top of the goal.

There was controversy in the dying minute when Butcher substituted Ross Caldwell who had only been on the pitch for ten minutes and the pair had words before the youngster walked straight down the tunnel.

After the game a delighted Terry Butcher said: "It wasn't the best of football matches – it was a gritty cup tie, but I'm delighted with the win. The players showed a level of fitness today and they showed some skill as well, when they get the ball down and pass it. We've seen different qualities in the side today we didn't know were there. They keep on surprising us. Ross County had one chance when Luckassen hit the post, while Ben Williams hasn't got a save to make. For the second

week running he's been kept inactive, and we've kept a clean sheet."

The draw for the fifth round of the competition is scheduled to take place on Monday afternoon at 2pm.

Hibernian: Ben Williams, Alan Maybury, Jordon Forster, Paul Hanlon, Ryan McGivern, Paul Cairney, Scott Robertson (Jones), Liam Craig (captain), Lewis Stevenson, Danny Handling (Caldwell, Taiwo), James Collins.

Subs: Sean Murdoch, Rowan Vine, Owain Tudur Jones, Tom Taiwo, Abdellah Zoubir, Ross Caldwell

Referee Craig Thompson

2,213