

Aberdeen 1-0 Hibernian: Hibs unbeaten run end at Pittodrie



Hibs' unbeaten run came to an end last night thanks to a sensational 25 yard strike from Willo Flood in the dying minutes after a hard fought encounter at Pittodrie.

Terry Butcher retained the same starting XI following last weekend's draw away to Dundee United, but there was a boost for the travelling support with teenage winger Alex Harris named amongst the substitutes.

The highly rated youngster had been missing from the side after breaking his foot back in August in the opening fixture against Motherwell.

Hibs started the game brightly and had a penalty claim after only two minutes when a poor pass back from Flood allowed Paul Heffernan to intercept the ball which he slipped past goalkeeper Langfield who appeared to catch the Hibs striker before he crashed to the turf however referee Craig Thomson was waved play on.

Moments later a free kick from Liam Craig found Jordon Forster but the youngsters cross cum shot flew past the post.

With Hibs' dominating possession, it took a desperate clearance from Reynolds to prevent Paul Cairney from turning in Forster's low cross.

Craig then went close with a free kick before Scott Robertson headed straight at Langfield.

Aberdeen weathered the storm however then after a series of corner kicks had a decent penalty shout turned down after Peter Pawlett chipped the ball over Ben Williams which struck

the arm of Michael Nelson before Forster hooked it clear.

Despite protests from the Dons' players, referee Thompson waved play on and indicated that it was 'ball to hand.'

Reynolds then forced Williams into action with a back post header before Nial McGinn went close from the edge of the box.

Just before the break, Heffernan pounced on a mistake by Johnny Hayes but the striker's shot on the turn flew inches wide of the near post.

On 51 minutes a flick from James Collins created a chance for Heffernan but his first time effort was saved by Langfield.

A powerful free kick from Cairney was held by Langfield before Dons substitute Calvin Zola had a great chance within seconds of his arrival only to head wide.

With time running out, it was Aberdeen who broke the deadlock in style.

With four minutes remaining, a clearance from Nelson fell to Willo Flood some 25 yards from goal and the Irish midfielder struck a sensational effort which flew into the net leaving Williams helpless.

After the game Terry Butcher told BBC Scotland: "It's a kick in the guts and we have to do far better in possession of the ball. We didn't retain it, we didn't put enough pressure on Aberdeen, we didn't play anywhere near the levels we can."

"He (Willow Flood) should have been shut down but full credit to Willow because it's a magnificent strike and worthy of winning any game, but we are disappointed because we didn't do enough. We only had one corner which indicates that we didn't apply enough pressure and we didn't retain the ball in the Aberdeen half anywhere near what we would have liked. That's the worst we've played since I've been at Hibs.

“We thought we had built up a head of steam but sometimes you need a slap in the face like this to make the players realise that if they are just slightly off the pace, if they are just slightly behind what the opponents are doing then we are not going to play to our normal rhythm. It’s a harsh reminder that we need to see the game out.

“There has been a lot of inconsistency about Hibs this season and that showed again today, but this is a good set of players, a good bunch of lads, and they will bounce back from this.”

Aberdeen: Langfield, Shaughnessy, Tate, Reynolds, Flood, Jack, Robson, Pawlett, Hayes (Anderson 89’), McGinn (Magennis 92’), and Vernon (Zola 83’) .Substitutes not used: Weaver, Murray, Smith, Wyle.

Hibernian: Williams, Forster, Nelson, Hanlon, McGivern, Cairney (Harris 80’), Robertson (Stanton 64’), Craig, Stevenson, Collins, Heffernan (Cummings 73’).Substitutes not used: Murdoch, Maybury, Handling, Tudur Jones.

Referee: Craig Thomson.

Attendance: 12,734.

Photo by John Preece

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