

Hibernian 2-1 Heart of Midlothian: Hibs win hard fought Edinburgh derby



A late Liam Craig penalty secured the three points for Hibs in a hard fought Edinburgh derby in front of a sell-out Easter Road last night.

Terry Butcher unsurprisingly named an unchanged side following Sunday's comfortable victory over Kilmarnock, however Irish striker Paul Heffernan was listed amongst the substitutes as he continues his recovery from a thigh injury.

Hearts captain Danny Wilson was ruled out through illness.

Hibs started where they left off against Kilmarnock and Paul Hanlon went close in the second minute with a volley from the edge of the box which went narrowly past.

Ryan Stevenson was lucky to escape a caution when he caught Michael Nelson with his elbow as both players were challenging for the ball.

Robertson had a fierce shot blocked as Hibs continued to press, but it was the visitors who almost opened the scoring in the 12th minute against the run of play.

Callum Patterson beat Michael Nelson on the left wing before sending in a dangerous cross which Callum Tapping directed goalwards only to be denied by a sensational save from Ben Williams.

Six minutes later Liam Craig's free kick was met by Jordon Forster but the young defender's looping header came back off the bar.

Scott Robinson was fortunate to escape with a yellow card after a reckless challenge on Jason Cummings on the edge of the box and Craig's free kick was met by Nelson but his header went past the post.

Cummings created an excellent chance in the 32nd when he was played in by Forster but the youngster's shot flew well wide.

A few minutes later Cummings sent in a looping header which MacDonald managed to tip over the bar.

Within a minute of the restart Hibs had a good shout for a penalty kick when Paul Cairney beat two Hearts' defenders before cutting the ball back to Collins whose shot appeared to strike the arm of Brad McKay.

Collins did well to set up Stevenson in the box, but with the goal gaping, the Hibs midfielder mishit his shot which sailed over the bar.

Ryan Stevenson was then booked for a reckless challenge on Nelson before Scott Robertson went close with a diving header from a Cairney cross as Hibs dominated possession.

The breakthrough eventually came on the hour mark when Paul Hanlon got on the end of a Craig corner and his header landed at the feet of James Collins who blasted the ball high into the net to the delight of the Hibs fans.

A smoke bomb was thrown onto the pitch from the East Stand as the players celebrated, and in the mayhem Butcher replaced Cummings with the more experienced Heffernan.

Within two minutes however Hearts were almost level when McKay headed just wide from Kevin McHattie's corner kick.

Robinson then did well to block a strike from Cairney before Heffernan almost doubled Hibs lead with a deft flick which flew agonisingly past the post with MacDonald well beaten.

With 20 minutes remaining Collins lost possession in the Hearts half and substitute Smith ran 50 yards with the ball before firing a shot which Williams was unable to hold. The rebound fell to Smith and his toe poke was deflected past his own keeper by Ryan McGivern.

The goal sparked crowd trouble with two fans invading the pitch before being separated by stewards.

Jamie Walker was then cautioned for a blatant dive in the box as he drove at Ryan McGivern as tempers flared.

Hibs eventually regained the lead with nine minutes remaining.

Lewis Stevenson slipped the ball past Jordan McGhee in the box, but with the ball seemingly heading out for a goal kick, the Hearts youngster inexplicably chopped the Hibs midfielder down and referee Bobby Madden had no hesitation in pointing to the spot.

Play was held up as furious Hearts' players argued over the decision whilst Liam Craig waited to take the penalty.

With Easter Road holding its breath, the Hibs' captain calmly sent MacDonald the wrong way and slotted the ball into the net.

Hibs continued to attack and in the five minutes of time added on, Heffernan and Collins both squandered excellent chances to seal the win, but in the end that didn't matter to the delighted Hibs' fans when Bobby Madden blew for full time.

After the game, Hearts manager Gary Locke continued to insist that penalty should not have been awarded although Ryan Stevenson admitted that the referee had been correct.

The result moved Hibs into the top six, overtaking St Johnstone whilst Hearts are now 16 points behind Ross County at the bottom of the table.

Hibs: Williams, McGivern, Hanlon, Nelson, Robertson (Tudur Jones 72'), Craig, Cairney (Stanton 88'), Collins, Stevenson, Forster, Cummings (Heffernan 60'). Substitutes not used: Murdoch, Tudur Jones, Maybury, Handling, Zoubir.

Hearts: MacDonald, Hamill, McHattie, McGowan, Stevenson, Robinson, Patterson, Walker, McKay, Tapping (Smith 65'), McGhee. Substitutes not used: Hamilton, Carrick, King, Nicholson.

Referee: Bobby Madden.

Attendance: 20,106