

Terry Butcher's reaction to Celtic defeat



After yesterday's four nil defeat to Celtic at Easter Road, an angry Terry Butcher faced the press, however unlike the previous week, his fury was not directed at his players, but rather the performance of referee Craig Thomson.

Thomson will never be forgiven by the Hibs' faithful after his display during the 2012 Scottish Cup Final and some of his decisions yesterday will only add to the distrust which clearly exists amongst the supporters.

Asked about his side's display in the 4-0 defeat, Butcher said: "We didn't deserve to lose 4-0.

"It was a quick debrief to the players and I told them they could hold their heads high because they had a right go today, particularly after the second half."

It certainly wasn't a 4-0 game which hinged on a couple of incidents really. Forster's save from Stanton was tremendous and the free kick which was given for handball was bizarre.

"The same referee didn't give a handball against the same player for the same incident at Aberdeen. And then we have a handball by a St Mirren player at the game last week which is not given.

"The ref said he cautioned Michael because he stopped the ball going through to an opponent, but if you look at the Aberdeen game with the same referee, same player, same incident he doesn't give a free-kick or a penalty.

"Last week Willie Collum – when the St Mirren player handles the ball not once but twice and stops the ball going through

to Sam yet according to the referee today that should be a penalty.

"I don't know what the rules are and how the refs interpret that but we are bitterly disappointed because we put a lot of effort into the game and I thought we played particularly well in the second half. The young players were excellent and we didn't deserve a four nil scoreline that's for sure.

"Our team's never played together before. We had Zoubir's first start for a while, Sam Stanton's first start ever, Tom Taiwo's first start for a long while, Alex Harris 'first start for a long while so in a way it's been remarkable what they have done today.

"To lose four nil is sickening but there are lessons to be learnt.

"We made Fraser Forster work harder than they made our keeper work and with a 4-0 scoreline that sounds a bit contradictory. The second goal was the key moment on the game. It was a great strike which gave Celtic a lot of licence to go for it which they did.

"I though we were great. Our shape was good and we frustrated Celtic and made them work hard for their victory.

"I'm delighted that Forster is English but I don't want to think about him tonight. Even when we hit the by line and were crossing balls, he's 6ft 7in and like a big crane when he goes down and gathers the ball.

"There are times when you play for the old firm when you don't have much to do in games and you have to concentrate but in the second half he had a fair bit to do and from out point of view that's really pleasing that we've been able to get forward. The younger player especially there's a bit energy to the team in the wider areas particularly with a bit of pace and trickery we were able to pin Celtic down and try and

create things. I thought the boys put a good shift in and I am pleased with them. Like I said it was a quick debrief as there were a lot more positives than negatives.”

When asked whether he will be speaking to the referee, he replied: “I don’t want to speak to Craig Thomson, no.”

“If I really say what I think about the referee’s performance then I would be in trouble with Mr Lunny (Vincent Lunny, SFA’s compliance officer) so I’m not going to go there.

“In my opinion, the handball was bizarre because I don’t know anyone who can control a ball hit at that pace with his hand. It wasn’t a deliberate handball. We’ve been penalised in the harshest way.”

Another option to managers upset at referee’s performances is to call the John Fleming, the SFA Head of Referees but Butcher will not be going down that route. He continued: “It’s a waste of time calling John Fleming. I’ve done it before but it’s a waste of time.”

Many supporters were incensed when Craig Thomson waved away a penalty claim after van Dijk clearly brought down James Collins inside the penalty box and when questioned about this incident Butcher said: “The players are adamant that it was a penalty. I think he (Thomson) said he dived after there was contact. But if there’s contact it’s a foul whether he’s dived or done a pirouette or a hand-stand.”

Photo by John Preece

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