

St Johnstone 2-0 Hibernian



Hibs will finish this season in the bottom six for the fourth campaign in a row after losing 2-0 to St Johnstone in Perth yesterday.

In truth, the scoreline flattered the Easter Road men and only a heroic performance from stand in goalkeeper Sean Murdoch, deputising for Ben Williams who missed the game to attend the birth of his child, prevented a humiliation.

As promised, manager Terry Butcher made several changes to his starting line up following last weekend's defeat against Partick Thistle.

Unfortunately two were forced with on form Duncan Watmore and Paul Hanlon both dropping out through injury.

Arsenal loanee Daniel Boateng made his full debut whilst Liam Craig, Kevin Thomson, (pictured) Paul Heffernan and Daniel Haynes returned to first team action

Hibs started the game brightly and almost opened the scoring in the 6th minute when Jordon Forster headed just past from Craig's cross.

Three minutes later, Fraser Wright almost scored an embarrassing own goal when he intercepted a cross from McGivern only to direct the ball high into the air almost catching out Alan Mannus who produced sensational fingertip save to the ball to divert it wide.

From the resultant corner kick Boateng headed the ball into the path of Heffernan whose shot was charged down.

Hibs continued to dominate possession and Haynes went close with an angled drive that flew across the face of goal and

just wide of the far post.

At the other end, Stevie May almost gave Saints the lead when he latched onto former Hibs' star David Wotherspoon's inch perfect cross but Murdoch produced a fine stop,

From the resultant corner kick however, McLean bundled the ball over the line following Wotherspoon's delivery and celebrated in front of the Hibs' travelling support.

McLean then missed a glorious chance to add a second after Wotherspoon's header found him unmarked two yards from goal but his strike flew over the bar with the goalkeeper beaten.

Heffernan and Stanton both had efforts blocked before Michael Nelson headed Craig's corner kick over as Hibs pushed for a leveller.

Murdoch then produced a fantastic save to deny Wotherspoon's close range diving header and St Johnstone went in one goal to the good at the break.

The Saints started the second half where they left off and Murdoch was soon called into action to prevent May doubling their advantage.

This only delayed the inevitable and the Perth side added a second when McGivern diverted James Dunne's cross into his own net.

Moments later, Hibs' hopes of a comeback were dashed when Haynes was shown a red card one following a reckless challenge on Wotherspoon.

St Johnstone took advantage of the extra man and Murdoch produced several fine saves to keep the deficit at two goals.

The Hibs' players left the field to a chorus of boos from the away end where the talk was one of relief to find out that all of the fellow strugglers had been beaten.

St Johnstone: Mannus, Mackay, Wright, Anderson, McDonald, Wotherspoon (Croft 84'), Dunne (Millar 73'), May, Miller, O'Halloran. Substitutes not used: Banks, Cregg, Hasselbaink, Clancy, Iwelumo.

Hibernian: Murdoch, McGivern, Nelson, Craig, Boateng, Taiwo (Handling 66'), Forster, Heffernan, Stanton (Stevenson 82'), Haynes, Thomson (Cairney 73'). Substitutes not used: Grant, Collins, Maybury, Cummings.

Referee: Steven McLean.

Attendance: 3,553

Photo by John Preece

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