

Hibernian 2-1 Livingston



A strike from GOALKEEPER Mark Oxley secured the three points for Hibs this afternoon in a hard fought encounter with John McGinn's Livingston at Easter Road.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made one enforced change to the line-up that lost narrowly to Rangers in midweek with veteran striker Paul Heffernan replacing the suspended Danny Handling.

The players were welcomed onto the pitch by 90 year old mascot Stewart Woolard who danced along with the Hibs' anthem Glory Glory to the Hibeers to the delight of the fans.

A number of former Hibs' stars watched the game from the West Stand, including Paul Kane, Tommy Preston, Pat Stanton, Peter Cormack, Eric Stevenson, Billy Hunter John Fraser and a certain Leigh Griffiths taking advantage of Celtic's free Saturday.

Livingston started brightly and hit the bar before Hibs took the lead in the 14th minute. A Liam Craig corner from the right was met by striker Farid el Alagui and his powerful header flew into the net.

Four minutes later, Hibs doubled their lead in bizarre fashion when keeper Oxley punted a long ball forward which bounced over Darren Jamieson into the goal, the first time such a goal has happened at Easter Road since 1988 when Andy Goram did likewise albeit in the other direction in a 3-1 win over Morton.

After that it was one way traffic with Liam Craig, Sam Stanton, Jordon Forster and Alex Harris all going close as Hibs looked to wrap the game up.

In 36 minutes, Craig sent a powerful long range strike goalwards and only a fingertip save from Jamieson kept his team in contention.

El Alagui should have done better three minutes later but his lob went inches over the bar.

Livingston were awarded a controversial free-kick on the edge of the box just before the break but the ball was cleared.

At half time Commonwealth Games gold medal winner Dave 'Waveheart' Wallace was paraded to the fans and received a standing ovation.

Hibs started the second half brightly and won a corner within seconds of the restart and Craig's cross missed everyone and bounced in front of the goals with no-one present to take advantage.

Three minutes later Livingston claimed a penalty when Gary Glenn was challenged as he prepared to shoot but the referee waved play on.

Harris then did well to set up Stanton but the youngster mishit his shot from 12 yards and the danger was cleared.

Livingston pulled a goal back in the 56th minute after yet another dreadful refereeing decision. Lewis Stevenson clearly won the ball on the edge of the area but Bobby Madden infuriated the home support by awarding a free kick which was taken by Keaghan Jacobs and Oxley could only parry the ball into the path of Declan Gallacher who side-footed the ball into the net to give Livingston hope.

David Gray did well to send in a dangerous cross which el Alagui just missed with a diving header, then the striker set up Heffernan but the Irishman took too long to shoot allowing a Lions' defender to put the tackle in.

With the crowd becoming nervous, Harris did well to win a corner and el Alagui managed to retain the ball near the corner flag as Hibs held on to secure the win.

Other results mean that Hibs sit 3rd in the Championship after one game. They face city rivals Hearts at Tynecastle next Sunday.

Hibs: Oxley, Gray, Hanlon, Forster, Harris, Robertson, El Alagui, Craig, Stanton (Kennedy 79'), Heffernan (Cummings 79'), Stevenson. Substitutes not used: Perntreou, Nelson, Allan, Booth, Tudur Jones.

Livingston: Jamieson, Talbot, Fordyce, Ky Jacobs, Ke Jacobs, O'Brien, Gallagher, McKenna, White (Robertson 81'), Glen (Hippolyte 71'), Mullen (Burchill 81'). Substitutes not used: Grant, Beaumont, Moffat, Rutherford.

Referee Bobby Madden

Attendance 9390