

# Hibernian 3-3 Falkirk



Hibs passed up a glorious chance to move six points clear of fifth placed Falkirk in the play-off race this afternoon after a Jason Cummings' (pictured) first half hat-trick gave them a 3-1 lead however a combination of poor defending and adverse weather conditions allowed the Bairns to grab a share of the points.

To make matters worse, with the score at 3-1, Hibs missed two great chances to put the game beyond doubt.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made three changes to the starting XI that drew with Hearts last Saturday. Dominique Malonga who is away on international was replaced by Martin Boyle whilst David Gray who is out through was replaced by Callum Booth who took over the right-back role. Dylan McGeouch replaced Danny Handling in midfield.

Hibs started brightly and took a deserved lead in the 12th minute when Scott Allan found Cummings whose shot took a deflection off Peter Grant before looping over Jamie MacDonald and into the net.

The former Hearts' keeper prevented McGeough from making it two nil as Hibs totally dominated the game however six minutes later Falkirk equalised with their first attack when John Baird headed in from a Kieran Duffie cross.

On 26 minutes, it looked as if the 'Bairns' had taken the lead when Blair Alston's free kick was flicked on by Rory Loy before being knocked in by Baird who was standing two yards offside.

It was apparent that the East Stand official Lorraine Clark was not certain whether Loy had touched the ball, but after

consultation with referee Willie Collum, Hibs were rightly awarded a free kick to the relief of the supporters.

Twelve minutes later, Hibs regained the lead when Allan's corner was met by Liam Fontaine and Cummings prodded the ball home from close range. There was some debate about the scorer however TV evidence confirmed that the teenager got the final touch.

Just before the break, Hibs looked to have secured the win when Boyle used his speed to beat MacDonald to the ball before picking out the unmarked Cummings who headed the ball into the empty net to complete his hat-trick.

Hibs almost made it 4-1 when Boyle again rounded MacDonald however his finish from a narrow angle went inches wide of the post.

Boyle then had another chance to score but a mix up with Allan ended with the ball being cleared.

Falkirk then hit back with two identical goals from Grant after Mark Oxley was twice caught in no-mans' land from corners. To be fair to the big keeper however the windy conditions played a part.

Oxley made amends with a fine save from Craig Sibbald as both clubs looked for a winner.

Fontaine and substitute Dja Djedje both had chances before Oxley saved a point with a good save from an Alston free kick in time added on.

Hibs remain three points in front of Falkirk and one in front of fourth placed Queen of the South whose game against Raith Rovers was postponed.

**Hibernian:** Oxley, Booth, Hanlon, Fontaine, Robertson, Craig, Stevenson, McGeouch, Allan (Handling 77'), Boyle (Dja Djedje 70'), Cummings. **Substitutes not used:** Perntreou, Stanton,

Heffernan, Sinclair, Martin.

**Falkirk:** MacDonald, Duffie, Sibbald, McCracken, Vaulks, Leahy, Alston, Grant, Kerr (Taiwo 86'), Loy, Baird (Morgan 82'). Substitutes not used: Bowman, Taiwo, Smith, Dick, Maybury, Cooper.

**Referee:** William Collum.

**Attendance:** 9,498.

Photo by John Preece