

Falkirk 0-1Hibernian



Hibs leapfrogged Raith Rovers into second place in the Championship with a hard fought one-nil win over Falkirk at the Falkirk Stadium tonight.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made three changes to the starting XI that beat Dumbarton 4-2 on Saturday with Paul Hanlon (pictured), Dylan McGeouch and Marvin Bartley replacing Fraser Fyvie, Liam Henderson and Liam Fontaine who were all listed as substitutes alongside Farid El Alagui making his first appearance of the season following a summer operation.

Former Hibs' midfielder Tom Taiwo missed the game through injury.

Hibs started brightly and both James Keatings and Jason Cummings went close with early chances however the 'Bairns' fought back and almost grabbed the lead after 15 minutes when former Hearts' striker Lee Miller's powerful header crashed back off the crossbar.

In the 24th minute Hibs were awarded a free kick in a dangerous position 25 yards from goal but Keatings' effort flew well over the bar.

Five minutes later a Hanlon clearance deflected off Bartley into the path of Blair Alston but the Falkirk youngster's strike was well saved by Mark Oxley.

With half time approaching Hibs took a deserved lead. Dominique Malonga fired a powerful effort toward the top corner, reminiscent of his goal against Dumbarton, but Danny Rogers produced a fingertip save however from the resultant corner, the ball fell to John McGinn who flicked it past Alston and surged into the box, but the Falkirk defender

blocked his path and referee Alan Muir had no hesitation in pointing to the spot.

Despite gamesmanship from Rogers and other Falkirk players, Cummings calmly sent the keeper with wrong way and dispatched the ball into the bottom right hand corner of the net to the delight of the large travelling support.

Hibs should have doubled their advantage in the 54th minute when a Cummings's dummy set up Malonga who found himself one on one with the Falkirk keeper but his chip from the penalty spot was easily saved by Rogers.

Hibs continued to dominate possession but Falkirk looked dangerous on the break and only a superb tackle by Lewis Stevenson prevented substitute John Baird equalising.

Falkirk then had a penalty claim when Miller collided with Oxley but the referee waved away the appeals.

Keatings then did well to find McGeouch but the midfielder was unable to find the space to shoot and the chance was lost.

In the 69th minute Henderson replaced Cummings which allowed Keatings to move to his more familiar position up front.

Bartley was booked for a foul on Alston as Falkirk fought hard to get back into the game then McGinn did well to find Keatings inside the area but the striker's shot went over the bar.

David Gray then sent a great cross into the box which a diving Malonga almost connected with before the Bairn had a sustained period of pressure and Darren McGregor did well to block a Miller strike from close range.

Fontaine replaced Keatings with five minutes remaining as Hibs looked to retain their narrow lead.

Henderson almost wrapped things up in the 88th minute with a

delicate chip which went inches over the bar but in the end it didn't matter as Hibs held on to secure the three points.

The result leaves Hibs on 22 points, one ahead of Raith rovers whom they meet at Starks Park on Saturday.

Falkirk: Rogers, Leahy, Muirhead, Vaulks, Alston, Sibbald, Kerr, Grant, Smith, Miller, Watson. Subs: Bowman, McGracken, Baird, Grant, McHugh, Blair, Sinnamon

Hibs: Oxley, Gray, Stevenson, Hanlon, McGregor, Bartley, McGeouch, McGinn, Keatings, Cummings, Malonga. Subs: Reguero, Fyvie, Henderson, El Alagui, Boyle, Feruz.

Attendance 5429

Photo by John Preece