

Falkirk 1-1Hibernian – Points shared at Falkirk Stadium



Hibs came from behind to grab a share of the points in a hard fought encounter against Falkirk at the Falkirk Stadium this afternoon however they could easily have won the game but for a poor refereeing decision and a world class save from the Falkirk keeper.

The game went ahead thanks to around 50 volunteers who turned up at the stadium last night to clear the snow off the pitch and the surrounding areas.

Hibs' fans hoping to see Anthony Stokes in action were disappointed although it is understood that the striker is about to sign a loan deal from Celtic.

Former skipper Kevin Thomson was present however and he is expected to sign for the club within the next few days.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made three changes to the starting Xi that beat Raith Rovers last Saturday with goal-scorer Darren McGregor replacing Niklas Gunnarsson, Fraser Fyvie returning from suspension to take over from Marvin Bartley and top scorer Jason Cummings (pictured) taking the place of Chris Dagnall.

Hibs started on the front foot and Cummings had a chance within the opening minute however his effort was high and wide.

The Hibs players then struggled to come to terms with the artificial surface and for the remainder of the first half both teams cancelled each other out with neither creating any clear cut chances. Cummings looked lively whilst Malonga had

two long range efforts which went well wide and a fierce drive from Will Valuks had Mark Oxley scrambling across his goal before flying inches past the post.

The first shot on target actually came in the 44th minute when John Baird set up Luke Leahy 12 yards from goal but the youngster's effort was tipped over the bar by Oxley.

Falkirk started the second half brightly and Lee Miller forced a good save from Oxley before the Bairns took the lead in the 49th minute. Good work from Baird set up Blair Aston and the youngster slotted the ball past Oxley into the corner of the net.

Liam Henderson replaced Keating then Hibs were denied a clear cut penalty when McGinn was brought down by Leahy inside the penalty area as he was about to shoot however unbelievably referee John Beaton waved away the appeals.

Henderson then set up Cummings but his effort was well saved by Danny Rogers. The keeper was soon in action again to hold a dangerous cross from Fyvie as Hibs pressed forward in search of an equaliser.

Henderson did well to create an opening down the left but his cross was too long, the on-loan midfielder then set up Cummings but his cross was cleared for a corner with Malonga waiting.

Hibs eventually grabbed the equaliser their play deserved in the 73rd minute. McGeouch set up Darren McGregor and the defender's powerful strike was parried by Rogers leaving Cummings with a tap in.

A minute later Malonga mistimed a free header from a corner and was replaced by Dagnall.

Alston was booked for a bad challenge on Henderson and Cummings went close with a header from the resultant free

kick.

McGregor had a header saved on the line then Cummings missed a glorious chance to secure the victory. Henderson lobbed the Falkirk defender into Cummings' path but Rogers produced a superb save from his powerful volley.

With time running out Henderson sent a low cross into the six yard box which Cummings just missed.

Hibs had three corners in time added on and another penalty appeal denied when the ball struck Peter Grant's arm from a Cummings shot but Falkirk managed to hold on for a share of the points.

The result leaves Hibs five points behind Rangers in the title race.

After the game Stubbs told BT Sport: "We look at it as two points dropped really. We felt that we did a lot in the game. I thought that for large parts of it we controlled it. First half I thought we were OK but we didn't create a lot considering the amount of ball that we had.

"Second half we've conceded and I thought our response was very good. I thought we should have had a penalty. I don't know why it hasn't been given.

"I'm disappointed that we've dropped two points today and the standards that we are setting ourselves right now we are right to be disappointed., but as I have said all along there are plenty of twists and turns along the way."

Falkirk: Rogers, Muirhead, Watson, Grant, Leahy, Alston, Vauks, Kerr, Sibbald, Miller, Baird. Subs: McCracken Bowman, Smith, Blair, McGrandles, O'Hara, Gallacher

Hibs: Oxley, McGregor, Fontaine, Hanlon, Stevenson, Fyvie, McGeouch, McGinn, Keatings, Malonga, Cummings Subs: Reguero Gray, Gunnarsson, Henderson, Bartley, Boyle, Dagnall

Referee John Beaton

Photo by John Preece