

Superb Hibs reach League Cup Final with 2-1 win over St Johnstone



A superb team performance from Hibs at a freezing cold and windy Tynecastle this afternoon secured a 2-1 win over St Johnstone and a place in the final of the Scottish League Cup presented by Utilita against either Celtic or Ross County.

The victory was thoroughly deserved as Stubbs' men dominated the game from the start although the Saints did look dangerous on the counter attack.

Head Coach Stubbs made one change to the starting XI that beat St Mirren last weekend with Dylan McGeouch returning in place of Marvin Bartley in midfield.

New on-loan signing Anthony Stokes missed the game due to a back injury however former skipper Kevin Thomson was listed amongst the substitutes after his move from Dundee.

After creating several good chances, Hibs took a deserved lead in the 28th minute after Liam Henderson was brought down inside the penalty area by Chris Millar. Referee Kenny McLean who was well placed had no hesitation in pointing to the spot and Jason Cummings calmly sent keeper Alan Mannus the wrong way by rolling the ball into the bottom right hand corner of the net.

The decision sparked outrage amongst the St Johnstone players who surrounded the official however at first viewing it looked a clear cut penalty.

Three minutes later the Saints equalised when former Hibs midfielder David Wotherspoon sent in an inch perfect cross

from the right and Joseph Shaughnessy rose to loop a terrific header past Mark Oxley into the corner of goal.

Just before the break Mannus dropped a Henderson corner but the Saints' defence manage to clear the danger.

Hibs' fans held their breath on the hour mark when Simon Lappin smashed a powerful free kick off the crossbar but the Easter Road men soon regained control and Mannus did well to save from Cummings and Dagnall.

The impressive John McGinn went close with a powerful shot, then Chris Dagnall dragged an effort inches wide of the post from twelve yards.

The breakthrough eventually came with 16 minutes remaining when McGinn surged forward and fired an unstoppable shot into the corner of the net leaving Mannus helpless.

The goal sparked wild celebrations from three sides of Tynecastle and moments later Hibs almost wrapped things up when McGinn released Dagnall but the striker's effort went agonisingly wide of the far post.

With time running out Oxley produced a superb diving save to prevent goal-scorer Shaughnessy taking the game into extra time with a powerful header.

Saints had one last chance before the final whistle but Rangers' target Michael O'Halloran shot high over the bar and Hibs held on for a well deserved victory.

McGinn was named 'Man of the Match' by the sponsors however the award could easily have gone to Henderson or McGeouch who were both magnificent as well.

Celtic face on-form Ross County tomorrow to decide who face Hibs in the final which takes place at Hampden Park on Sunday 13th March.

Hibernian: Oxley. Gray, Henderson (McGregor 89'), Hanlon, Fontaine, Fyvie, McGeouch, Stevenson, McGinn, Dagnall, Cummings (Keatings 87'). Substitutes not used: Virtanen, Bartley, Boyle, Gunnarsson, Thomson.

St Johnstone: Mannus, Mackay, Lappin, Anderson, Millar (Craig 64'), Davidson, MacLean Wotherspoon (Sutton 78'), Shaugnessy, Easton (Scobbie 46'), O'Halloran. Substitutes not used: Clark, Cummins, Fisher, Thomson.

Referee: Steven McLean.

Attendance: 16,971.