

Alan Stubbs admits that players had to 'dig deep' to progress to quarter finals



Hibs' Head Coach Alan Stubbs admitted that his players had to 'dig deep' to progress to the quarter finals of the William Hill Scottish Cup after a pulsating 90 minutes against city rivals Hearts at Easter Road last night.

After dominating the first half with some superb one touch football, Hibs looked to be cruising into the next round, but Hearts came back fighting in the second period and it was a combination of stout defending and poor finishing which kept the score at 1-0 and sent the green and white clad supporters home in a happy mood.

After the game Stubbs said: "It is a great result for the players and the club but we had to dig deep tonight to come though.

"Hearts put us under pressure in the second half but we managed to contend with it and get the result we all wanted.

"I said it would be a close game, two good teams but we created the clearer chances in the game and we had to deal with some difficult balls into the box and defend properly and I knew there would be times when we would be under pressure.

"But there is no denying they are a good team. We have just beaten the third-best team in the county at this moment in time."

With tackles flying in and no quarter being asked or given, referee John Beaton controversially sent two players off in the last 15 minutes however neither decision won the support

of the Hibs' boss.

Firstly, Paul Hanlon was clearly fouled on the half way line. Hearts skipper Blazej Augustyn reacted furiously to the decision, picking the ball up then throwing it to back up the pitch in what the referee deemed an act of petulance.

Moments later, Jason Cummings kicked the ball away after being given offside. At first the referee appeared to take no action however after being surrounded by Hearts' players he spoke to the young striker who seemed to argue. That was enough for a second yellow card to be shown to add to the one he received for his goal celebrations.

Stubbs however had some sympathy and added: "I thought the sending-offs actually spoilt the game a little bit.

"I thought they were soft red cards in the end. I don't want to see any players sent off. I just thought it affected the momentum of the game for both teams

"I think in the first one, you are always running the risk but I didn't think he (Cummings) did anything wrong apart from stand there.

"He didn't make any actions towards the fans, he stayed on the pitch, which is what you are supposed to do.

"For the second one I think he was booked for booting the ball away but I am led to believe he was actually looking to fetch the ball and didn't boot the ball away.

"I am obviously guessing a little from what people are saying but I thought it was a bit harsh. But we won and we are delighted."