

Hibs' hopes of automatic promotion in tatters following Dumbarton defeat



Before this game started Hibs had an uphill task to win automatic promotion, now they have a mountain to climb after losing their second game in four days.

Now instead of looking upward toward Rangers who beat St Mirren with a late goal this afternoon, Hibs are looking over their shoulder toward Falkirk who moved to within two points after coming from a goal down to beat Queen of the South.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made five changes to the starting XI that lost to Morton on Wednesday night with Niklas Gunnarsson, Paul Hanlon, Marvin Bartley, Dan Carmichael and James Keatings returning to the side.

Dumbarton fielded two former Hearts' players in their line up, Christian Nade and Darren Barr. Former Hibs' keeper Mark Brown was listed amongst the substitutes.

Hibs started brightly with both Jason Cummings and Hanlon going close before Liam Henderson almost opened the scoring with a long range effort which rebounded off the bar.

It was the 'Sons however who took the lead against the run of play in the 20th minute when Kevin Cawley picked up the ball before beating Bartley and firing the ball into the near post corner of the net from 25 yards.

John McGinn almost set up Keating with a fine cross but the striker was just unable to get his head to the ball as Hibs pressed for an equaliser.

In the 36th minute Hibs were awarded a free kick which McGinn fired in toward Keatings who set up Carmichael but the winger's strike flew inches past the post.

Jamie Ewings then produced a superb save from Cummings but despite their pressure, Stubbs' men found themselves two goals down in the 41st minute.

A speculative cross from Mark Docherty was headed into the net by Nade with Mark Oxley caught in no mans' land.

Just after half time Dumbarton appeared to have wrapped the game up when Barr headed home a near post corner to make the score 3-0 but Hibs continued to fight and Henderson almost set up Carmichael but his cross was too high.

They eventually pulled one back in the 56th minute when Henderson picked the ball up in midfield, drove into the box and curled a superb shot into the top corner of the net.

Stubbs immediately made two changes with Farid El Alagui and Martin Boyle replacing Marvin Bartley and James Keatings.

Moments later Hanlon was forced to leave the field with an injury picked up during a first half challenge with Nade and was replaced by Fontaine.

McGinn almost set up El Alagui but a Dumbarton defender managed to clear the ball for a corner which was easily taken by Ewings.

In the 70th minute Boyle hit the post and the ball fell to Henderson but the midfielder's strike was cleared off the line. The resultant corner was floated into the area and Fontaine headed the ball into the path of El Alagui who blasted the ball into the net from 12 yards to make the score 3-2.

From then on it was one way traffic as Hibs fought for an equaliser.

Ewings then did well to save a long range effort from Cummings and Hibs had a penalty claim denied when McGregor appeared to be tripped inside the area but referee Barry Cook waved away the players' appeals.

With time running out Cummings headed over from close range then El Alagui got on the end of a Carmichael cross but again his effort went just over and Dumbarton held on to secure the victory.

Dumbarton: Ewings, Docherty, Saunders, Buchanan, Cawley, Barr, Waters, Nade, Lindsay, Wright, Walsh. Subs Taggart, Kirkpatrick, Fleming, McCallum, Hopkins, Heh, Brown

Hibs: Oxley, Gunnarsson, Hanlon McGregor, Stevenson, Henderson, McGinn, Carmichael, Bartley, Keatings, Cummings. Subs: Virtanen, Fontaine, El Alagui, Boyle, Dagnall, Thomson, Shaw

Referee Barry Cook