

Hibs make seven changes but still cruise to 3-0 victory over Alloa



A much changed Hibs side cruised to a comfortable 3-0 victory over Alloa Athletic at Easter Road this afternoon thanks to a Martin Boyle double and a Dan Carmichael strike just before half time.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs completely reshuffled his pack making seven changes to the starting XI that knocked Hearts out of the Scottish Cup on Tuesday night.

Only Mark Oxley, Liam Henderson, Paul Hanlon and Marvin Bartley retained their place in the team, with Liam Fountain, Dylan McGeouch, Boyle, James Keatings, Carmichael, Niklas Gunnarsson and Chris Dagnall coming into the side.

The players they replaced, with the exception of the suspended Lewis Stevenson all made the bench.

Given Alloa's recent form which included a draw with Championship leaders Rangers last weekend, some questioned Stubbs' decision to make so many changes but he was vindicated in the fourth minute when Boyle latched onto a superb Henderson pass before chipping the ball over Scott Gallacher's head and slotting the ball into the empty net.

Steven Hetherington almost equalised a minute later but the striker was unable to control the cross which ended up in a relieved Oxley's arms.

In the 16th minute the supporters of both teams took part in a minutes applause in memory of teenage Hibs' fan Leon Rendle who sadly passed away on Thursday after a long battle with

bone cancer.

Hibs dominated the remainder of the first half then added a deserved second just before the break. Keatings picked up the ball on the edge of the area and tried to make space for himself to shoot however instead he slipped a fantastic through ball into the path of Carmichael and the winger calmly passed the ball into the bottom corner of the net.

Alloa started the second half brightly and created three good chances in the first ten minutes. Marvin Bartley did well to break up a two v one attack after Gunnarsson slipped then Michael Duffy ran clear of Fontaine before lobbing the ball over Oxley onto the top of the net. Hetherington then fired a long range effort inches wide of the post.

Hibs soon regained their composure and John McGinn replaced McGeouch, receiving a standing ovation from the Hibs' fans.

Keating then set up Dagnall with a deft touch however instead of shooting, the striker cut back inside and his tame effort was easily saved.

Hibs wrapped things up with 15 minutes remaining. Bartley did well to find man of the match Henderson who in turn found McGinn. The fans' favourite slipped the ball to Dagnall and his shot fell to Boyle who side footed the ball into the net from 4 yards.

Bartley then left the field to another standing ovation from the fans who have taken the Englishman to their heart because of his hard working displays.

McGinn had the fans on their feet with a 60 yard run as Hibs looked to add to their tally but the game ended with a valuable three points remaining in the capital.

After the game Stubbs said: " The most important thing was to get the three points and we have managed to do that. I've got

a core of 19/20 players who could all play in the starting XI so I didn't have any problems making the changes today. I trust all my players and know what they can do. We have to utilise the squad and chop and change when we have the opportunity."

Keatings said: "The most important thing was to get the win. It was good to get the three points and the boys who have come in did a good job. We've got a strong squad."

Hibs, Oxley, Henderson, Hanlon, Fontaine, Bartley, McGeouch, Boyle, Keatings, Carmichael, Gunnarsson, Dagnall. Subs: Virtanen, Gray, McGinn, McGregor, Stokes, Thomson, Cummings.

Alloa Athletic: Gallacher, Hill, Hamilton, Marr, Duffy, O'Brien, McManus, Layne, Hetherington, Finnie, Megginson. Subs: Crawford, McAusland, Reintam, Holmes,, Ferns, Crawford, Caddis.

Referee Nick Walsh

Attendance 8765