

Alan Stubbs pays tribute to Ross County



Hibs' Head Coach paid tribute to his Ross County counterpart Jim McIntyre and his staff for winning the Scottish League Cup at Hampden Park yesterday although he believes that the trophy should be in the Easter Road boardroom this morning.

Hibs had the majority of possession in the early stages but fell behind against the run of play when man of the match Jackson Irvine intercepted a pass from Kevin Thomson before sending Michael Gardyne through on goal. Marvin Bartley almost managed to clear the danger but the ball ended up in the net.

Liam Fontaine equalised just before the break, then with the game poised for extra time County won possession in midfield and Gardyne broke away down the left wing before sending a dangerous ball into the penalty box. With Brian Graham lurking at the back post, Fontaine attempted to clear the ball but could only divert it into the path of Alex Schalk who scored from close range.

Hibs' hopes of automatic promotion have all but gone with Rangers now 17 points clear however they remain in the Scottish Cup and have a replay with Inverness Caledonian Thistle on Wednesday night to look forward to.

A win in the Highlands would secure a semi-final place against Dundee United and a return to the national stadium but the club's priority remains promotion through the play offs.

After the game Stubbs told BBC Scotland: "Congratulations to Jim, Billy and Roy. They've done a great job there and it's a fairytale story for them."

"You've got to give Ross County credit, they put an awful lot into the game. They've matched us up, which they've not done in a lot of games this season, because of our threat. It became a midfield battle.

"The (Hibs) players are going to be majorly disappointed because on another day they could be celebrating now. That's how close it can be at times. That's football. It can be cruel."

"I thought we were the better team. I don't think there's any denying that, but how many times have we been in this position that the best teams don't necessarily win.

"Overall did we do enough? Maybe, but maybe not. I felt we were the better team. Not massively, but I felt we just shaded it.

"Unfortunately you don't get a winners medal for that.

"There's still a huge amount to play for. Anything you do in cup competitions is a bonus. We would have loved to have won today."