

Hibs heading back to Hampden thanks to Anthony Stokes' double



Hibs are heading back to Hampden Park next month for a Scottish Cup semi-final against Dundee United thanks to two first half goals from on-loan striker Anthony Stokes against the cup holders Inverness Caledonian Thistle at the Tulloch Caledonian Stadium tonight.

Iain Vigurs pulled one back for Inverness in the 77th minute before a face injury to Hibs' goalkeeper Mark Oxley meant seven additional minutes were added on, but the visitors survived an anxious period to secure a famous victory.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made one change to the starting XI that lost to Ross County in the League Cup Final on Sunday with James Keatings who scored in the 1-1 draw between the clubs at Easter Road replacing Kevin Thomson in midfield.

Hibs started brightly and Jason Cummings went close with a long range effort after good work from John McGinn then David Gray had a shot from the edge of the area blocked by Carl Tremarco.

Inverness also looked dangerous and Darren McGregor did well to block a Nat Wedderburn effort whilst Lewis Stevenson did well to clear a long Tremarco throw in.

Wedderburn was spoken to by referee Steven Finnie after a 'tactical' foul on McGinn as both sides looked to gain the advantage.

Hibs eventually took the lead in the 35th minute when Cummings set up Stevenson on the left wing and the full back's cross

struck a defender before dropping into the path of Anthony Stokes who fired the ball into the net from 10 yards, much to the delight of the large travelling support.

Five minutes later whilst the fans were still celebrating, Hibs doubled their lead when Liam Henderson drove into the box and passed to Cummings. The youngster's shot was well saved by Fon Williams but he was unable to hold the ball and Stokes was on hand to tap in the rebound from close range.

As expected, Thistle came out for the second half determined to get back into the game and forced an early corner which came to nothing then Tremarco went close with a back post header.

Mark Oxley then did well to hold a Lewis Horner effort as Caley pressed forward and moments later John Hughes' side won a free kick on the edge of the area when Liam Fontaine fouled Horner. Horner took the free kick and Oxley produced a great save, punching the ball clear.

Hibs immediately broke away and Wedderburn was booked for bringing down Henderson.

In the 66th minute Owain Fon Williams produced a good save to prevent Stokes from completing his hat trick and moments later the keeper did well to save from McGinn.

Josh Meekings had the chance to pull one back but his powerful volley went well wide of the post.

Inverness threw everything into attack and Gary Warren went close with a header from Ian Vigurs corner.

With 13 minutes remaining Thistle pulled one back when Vigurs got on the end of a long ball into the area and slammed the ball into the net from six yards.

They almost equalised seconds later when Danny Devine sent a dangerous ball into the area. Oxley and Fontaine appeared to

crash into each other as Liam Hughes spooned the ball over the bar from close range.

Stubbs replaced Keatings with Niklas Gunnarsson to shore up the defence and Danny Williams headed over from a Vigurs free kick.

Oxley required treatment for a face injury sustained in his clash with Fontaine and it looked as though he would have to leave the field however he elected to remain on despite apparently having blurred vision.

Oxley was then booked for time wasting and after a clash with Williams he was replaced by Otso Virtanen in goal.

Stevenson conceded another free kick in a dangerous position in the last minute but Vigurs strike flew just over the bar.

The fourth official then indicated seven minutes of added time which was greeted with cheers from the home supporters and a burst of singing from the Hibs' fans.

It was Hibs however who had the better chances during that period. Firstly Henderson fired a powerful strike toward the top corner but Fon Williams managed to tip the ball for a corner.

Cummings then broke away and found Stokes but his effort was easily saved. stokes had another chance but his shot struck the side netting and in the dying seconds Cummings went close with a long range effort as Hibs held on to secure the victory.

Inverness Caledonian Thistle: Fon Williams, Tremarco, Warren, Meekings, Draper, Foran, Devine, Wedderburn, Horner, Hughes, Vigurs Subs: Esson, Williams, Roberts D Williams, Polworth, Storey

Hibs: Oxley, Gray, McGregor, Fontaine, Stevenson, Bartley, McGinn, Henderson, Keatings, Cummings, Stokes. Subs: Virtanen,

Thomson, Dagnall, Gunnarsson, Handling, Boyle, El Alagui

Referee Steven Finnie

Attendance 3207