

Last minute goal wins cup for the Staggies



Ross County won their first major trophy today after beating Hibernian 2-1 thanks to a last minute goal by Alex Schalk.

Both teams had chances in a hard fought and frenetic encounter, but it was the Staggies who emerged victorious.

Alan Stubbs made two changes to the starting XI that drew 1-1 with Inverness Caledonian Thistle last weekend. As expected Dylan McGeouch missed out due to injury and he was replaced by Marvin Bartley whilst James Keatings made way for Jason Cummings.

Unfortunately, Fraser Fyvie did not make the bench although there was a surprise for the travelling Hibs' fans with long term injury victim Danny Handling listed amongst the substitutes.

Hibs started brightly but had an early injury scare when David Gray suffered a head knock in the 8th minute. Three minutes later Cummings almost gave Hibs the lead with a superb 30 yard effort which Gary Woods did well to tip over the bar.

Ross County looked dangerous on the break and Darren McGregor did well to clear a dangerous cross from Michael Gardyne.

Cummings was inches away from connecting to a dangerous cross from Gray when the slightest touch would have opened the scoring then Anthony Stokes had a powerful strike saved by Woods.

With Hibs dominating possession, County took the lead against the run of play. Jackson Irvine pounced on a slack pass from Kevin Thomson in midfield then slipped the ball into the path of Gardyne. Bartley managed to get a tackle in but the ball fell into the County strikers path and he calmly dribbled past Mark Oxley before slipping the ball into the empty net.

Hibs had a penalty claim denied when Richard Foster blocked a Stokes strike with his arm then McGinn sent a great through ball into the path of Cummings who tried to lob the keeper but Woods managed to tip the ball away.

Hibs eventually got back on level terms just before the break. Liam Henderson's corner was flicked on by Gray and the ball fell to Liam Fontaine who fired the ball past Woods from 12 yards.

Hibs almost took the lead in the 53rd minute when Stevenson passed to Stokes who had his back to goal. The on-loan striker turned and fired the ball inches wide of the post.

In the 62nd minute Bartley was lucky to escape a red card after elbowing Brian Graham in the face as tempers frared in both teams.

Thomson then set up Cummings but the youngster elected to pass to Stokes and his effort was blocked.

With 15 minutes remaining Graham had the ball in the net for the Staggies but his effort was correctly ruled out for offside.

Hibs survived another scare when Alex Shalk's cross was headed into the net by Graham but the referee adjudged that the striker had fouled Oxley.

With extra time looming, Ross County grabbed the winning goal. Gardyne broke away down the right wing and sent a dangerous cross into the box. Fontaine tried to clear the ball however he could only direct in into the path of Schalk who prodde the ball home from two yards.

With four minutes of time added on, Hibs threw everything into attack and Fontaine almost equalised with an overhead kick but Woods was able to tip the ball over the bar.

Hibs: Oxley, Gray, Henderson, Fontaine, McGregor, Bartley, Thomson, Stevenson, McGinn, Stokes, Cummings. Subs Virtanen, Gunnarsson, Boyle, Keatings, Dagnall, El Alagui, Handling

Ross County: Woods, Fraser, Gardyne, McShane, Boyce, Foster, Davies, Schalk, Woods, Irvine, Quinn. Substitutes: Konopka, Boyd, Robertson, Graham, Franks, Murdoch, De Vita

Referee Kevin Clancy

Attendance 38,796