

Conrad Logan the hero as Hibs reach Scottish Cup final



Hibs will be back at Hampden Park next month for the final of the William Hill Scottish Cup after a dramatic penalty shoot out win over Dundee United this afternoon.

Hero of the hour was Conrad Logan, the emergency keeper signed from Leicester City who was the man of the match during the 120 minutes then saved two penalties in the shoot out.

Hibs had the better of the first period but Dundee United came back into the game and it could have gone either way, but it was the Hibs' players who held their nerves and were rewarded with a return trip to the national stadium in five weeks time.

Head Coach Alan Stubbs made two changes to the starting XI that drew with Falkirk on Tuesday. In a surprise move, Logan who hasn't started a competitive first team game since December 2014 replaced the suspended Mark Oxley in goal rather than January signing Otso Virtanen and Liam Henderson replaced Martin Boyle. Farid El Alagui recovered from injury to win a place of the bench.

Dundee United made four changes with Chris Erskine, Blair Spittal, Sean Dillon and Coll Donaldson all starting.

Hibs started on the front foot and had an early chance when Cummings tired an ambitious overhead kick from a Lewis Stevenson cross but his effort flew well over the bar.

With Hibs dominating possession it took until the seventh minute before Logan actually touched the ball when he dealt with a Darren McGregor pass pack.

A minute later Anthony Stokes sent a good cross to the back

post which David Gray headed down to Cummings but his shot on the turn was easily saved by Kawashima.

Fraser Fyvie almost opened the scoring with a 30 yard strike which scraped the crossbar then John McGinn was wrongly ruled offside when he broke through onto a Stokes pass.

Hibs had a penalty claim denied when Fyvie went down inside the area just before United almost grabbed the opener when Billy McKay broke clear but Logan produced a fine save to deny the striker.

In the 24th minute another Hibs penalty claim was denied when Marvin Bartley went down following a challenge then moments later referee John Beaton did award a spot kick after a Fyvie cross was blocked by Donaldson's arm.

Cummings took the resultant penalty and tried to dink the ball over Eiji Kawashima, 'Panenka' style but his effort floated agonisingly over the bar to the dismay of the Hibs' fans.

Hibs continued to press forward and McGinn was unlucky when his flick from another Gray cross went just past the post.

Mixu Paatelainen immediately made a substitution with Paul Dixon replacing Callum Morrison to combat Gray's overlapping runs.

Just before the break United almost scored after a mix up between Paul Hanlon and Logan when McKay, who was clearly offside pounced but Logan did well to spread himself and clear the danger.

Hibs started the second half brightly and McGinn did well to set up Stevenson but the full backs cross was cleared.

Gray then sent in a powerful cross from the right which just eluded Cummings and Liam Henderson linked up well with Stokes to create another chance but Sean Dillon did well to block the youngster's shot.

From then, United came back into the game and almost opened the scoring when Ryan Dow's deflected shot was headed off the line by Hanlon.

In the 71st minute Donaldson left the field injured and was involved in a furious argument with Paatelainen who did not have a substitute ready to replace him.

Stubbs also made a change, replacing Stokes with El Alagui and moments later Henderson with Martin Boyle.

Both teams then appeared to settle for extra time and the 90 minutes finished goalless.

United dominated extra time and after only four minutes, El Alagui broke down with a recurrence of his injury and was replaced by Chris Dagnall.

In the 97th minute, Logan produced another good save, diving low to his left to tip a long range John Rankin strike past the post and from the resultant corner McKay fired over the bar.

Just before the first break, substitute Henri Anier who spent the first half of the season on loan at Easter Road broke clear but once again Logan made himself large to block his shot.

Hibs were struggling to get out of their own half although on a rare attack Cumming went close after cutting in from the right but the United keeper managed to claw the ball away.

With both sides tired, the game fizzled out and ended 0-0.

The penalties were taken at the Hibs end and Blair Spittal took the first which Logan saved after diving to his left. John McGinn took Hibs' first and sent the ball low into the bottom corner of the net.

McKay took United's second and once again Logan was the hero,

diving low to his right this time to save the shot. Hanlon took Hibs' second which he fired into the bottom right hand corner leaving the keeper helpless.

At this point Hibs looked to be in a commanding position but Dixon made it 2-1 with a well taken spot kick, beating Logan for the first time in the game. Boyle responded and fired his spot kick high into the net before Demel made it 3-2.

The Hibs fans knew that another goal would mean victory and held their breath as a smiling Cummings took the responsibility. They needn't have worried though as the youngster calmly slotted the ball past Kawahima into the net sparking wild celebrations amongst the delighted Hibs' fans.

Hibs will face either Rangers or Celtic in the final which takes place on Saturday 21st May. The pair meet tomorrow at the national stadium.

After the game when questioned about his choice of keeper Stubbs told BBC Scotland: "People have been questioning me and it could have been Otso (Virtanen) but I went for experience and made the right call."

Hibs: Logan, Gray, Hanlon, McGregor, Stevenson, Henderson, Bartley, McGinn, Fyvie, Cummings, Stokes. subs: Virtanen, El Alagui, Handling, Boyle, Gunnarsson, Dagnall, Thomson

Dundee United: Kawashima, Dillon, Morris, Paton, McKay, Rankin, Erskine, Knoyle, Dow, Spittal, Donaldson Subs: Zwick, Dixon, Ofere, Fraser, Anier, Simama-Pongolle, Demel

Referee John Beaton

Attendance 19,651