

# Neil Lennon refuses to blame keeper Otso Virtanen for blunder



Hibs' Head Coach Neil Lennon refused to criticise keeper Otso Virtanen after his mistake in the 16th second of the game gave Brondby IF an early lead in last night's Europa League qualification game.

The Danes held on to the one goal advantage in an ill tempered hard fought encounter and the Hibs' boss believes that only a lack of match sharpness separated the teams and he is convinced that another week's pre-season training could make all the difference in Copenhagen next week.

Although he did not blame his young keeper, he did not offer the same opinion of the match officials and he revealed after the game that he wants to appeal against his 'sending off' following his protests after Jason Cumming's 'goal' was wrongly chalked off.

Referee Juan Martinez Munuera has 'previous' for controversial displays and he cautioned 11 and sent off two in a match between Barcelona and Espanyol last season.

Speaking immediately after the game Lennon said: "My team were superb against a very good side. We just lacked a bit of sharpness. The goal was either nerves from Otso or he was caught cold by a lack of concentration. It was avoidable, but I'm not here to hang the kid out to dry."

"I'll see if I can appeal it. It's nonsense. It's a double punishment. We had a good goal disallowed and I was sent to the stand for disagreeing with a wrong decision.

"It's the first time in Europe I've been sent to the stand so I'm irked by that. It looked to me as if the ref wanted to be the star of the show rather than the players.

"We had a legitimate perfect, brilliant goal disallowed. I was angry as the assistant got it wrong and wasn't up with play.

"I remonstrated with him and was sent off for no reason whatsoever. I didn't think the ref had a good game, the relationship with his linesmen was poor."