

Hibs consolidate position at top of Championship with comfortable 2-0 win over St Mirren



Hibs consolidated their position at the top of the Championship this afternoon with a comfortable 2-0 victory over bottom of the table St Mirren.

Head Coach Neil Lennon made one change to the starting XI that beat Dunfermline Athletic last Saturday with Martin Boyle replacing the injured James Keatings. Top scorer Jason Cummings was listed amongst the substitutes.

The visitors started brightly and had two chances in the opening minute before Hibs settled down and started to control the game.

Andrew Shinnie almost opened the scoring in the second minute when he latched onto a Darren McGregor header but his shot on the turn flew inches wide.

Five minutes later, Shinnie created Hibs' opener with a fantastic through ball into the path of Boyle who calmly dinked it over Jamie Langfield into the net.

Hibs should have had a penalty in the 10th minute when Jack Baird bundled over Grant Holt inside the six yard box, but referee Don Robertson ignored the players' appeals, the first of many strange decisions from the official.

St Mirren looked dangerous on the break and on set pieces and Lawrence Shankland almost equalised with a header following a Stevie Mallen corner but Lewis Stevenson was on hand to clear

the ball off the line.

Shinnie then went close with a 25 yard strike which Langfield managed to tip round the post.

Boyle should have added a second in the 32nd minute after a superb pass from Holt which left him one on one with the keeper, but on this occasion Langfield produced a fine save.

Moments later Holt made it 2-0 with a great volley from the edge of the penalty area after his first attempt was blocked by a Saints' defender.

Ofir Marciano had to leave his box and head clear with Ryan Hardie ready to pounce then just before the break, Hibs were denied a clear cut penalty when a St Mirren defender had Holt in a bear hug, much to the annoyance of the large Hibs' support.

At half time, several players from the 1991 Skol League Cup winning team paraded the trophy to mark the 25th anniversary of that historic day.

In the 55th minute, a long ball from Paul Hanlon found Boyle but his strike under pressure went just wide.

Ten minutes later, Shinnie set up Boyle but the linesman wrongly flagged for offside then John McGinn intercepted a pass in midfield and fired a powerful strike from 30 yards which flew inches past the post with Langfield helpless.

In the 70th minute Hibs were eventually awarded a penalty after Gary Irvine hauled down Holt as he tried to get onto the end of a Stevenson cross. The striker took the spot kick himself but Langfield produced a fantastic save diving low to his left.

McGinn picked up an injury and was replaced by Marvin Bartley and Hibs should have wrapped things up with ten minutes remaining. Holt flicked the ball into the path of Boyle who

set up Shinnie, but once again Langfield produced a fine save from 12 yards.

In time added on, Alex Harris replaced 'Man of the Match' Boyle who left the field to a standing ovation and Hibs held on to secure a valuable three points.

After the game Lennon said: "I'm very pleased. It was a good performance from start to finish and we dominated the game."

Boyle said: " I'm delighted. I was given the chance from the start and hopefully I can hang onto the shirt."

Elsewhere Dundee United beat Falkirk leaving Hibs three points clear at the top of the table.

Hibs: Marciano, Gray, Hanlon, Fontaine, McGregor, Stevenson, Fyvie, McGinn, Shinnie, Boyle Holt Subs Laidlaw, Bartley, Forster, Graham, Harris, Cummings, Martin.

St Mirren: Langfield, Naismith, Irvine, Gordon, Clark, Clarkson, Mallan, Hutton, Baird, Morgan, Hardie, Shankland.
Subs: Gallacher, Sutton, Gallagher, Walsh, McLear, Whyte, Magennis

Referee Don Robertson

Attendance 14, 465