

Another boost for Hibs' promotion hopes with victory over Queen of the South



Hibs hopes of automatic promotion took another boost this afternoon with a 1-0 win over on-form Queen of the South at Palmerston Park.

That result, coupled with Dundee United's draw against Dunfermline leaves Hibs eight points clear at the top of the table, with a vastly superior goal difference.

Head Coach Neil Lennon made two changes to the starting XI that beat Bonnyrigg Rose last weekend. Ross Laidlaw took over in goal from the injured Ofir Marciano and John McGinn replaced Chris Humphrey.

New signing Scott Gallacher was listed amongst the substitutes.

Queen of the South fielded three former Hibs' players, John Rankin, Stephen Dobbie and Dan Carmichael.

Hibs took time to adjust to the artificial surface and Grant Holt spurned a good early chance by firing over from 12 yards.

James Keatings then went close with a left foot trike from the edge of the area and Andrew Shinnie shot wide under pressure from Queens' defenders.

In the 22nd minute McGinn sent in a dangerous cross and Jason Cummings attempted an acrobatic overhead kick although he would have been better leaving it to Holt who was in a position to take a free header.

Moments later Laidlaw did well to save a long range effort from Rankin.

Just before the break, Shinnie had a chance but his strike flew just over the bar from the edge of the area and the teams went in level at half time.

Hibs took a deserved lead in the 52nd minute after McGinn volleyed home from a James Keatings floated corner to the back post.

The Doonhamers almost equalised immediately but Laidlaw produced a fine save to deny Dobbie.

From then it was one way traffic as Hibs looked to add to their lead and the large travelling support claimed for a penalty when McGinn tangled with Scott Mercer on the edge of the area but the referee waved play on.

Queens' keeper Lee Robinson did well to tip the ball round the post from a Holt strike then he did well to scramble clear a low David Gray cross.

Liam Fontaine was booked for obstruction on substitute Derek Lyle and Gray was also shown a yell for a foul on Lyndon Dykes.

Martin Boyle replaced Cummings then with five minutes remaining Lennon made a double substitution, taking off Keatings and Holt and replacing them with Jordon Forster and Brian Graham.

The hosts threw everything forward in a bid to grab an equaliser but Hibs comfortably held on to secure all three points.

After the game Neil Lennon told BBC Scotland: "I thought we were excellent and the scoreline could have been a bit more in our favour.

"For long periods I thought we controlled the game, probably didn't penetrate as we would have liked first half, but in the second half we had a really good spell for about 25 minutes. Obviously, we got the goal and their goalkeeper made a couple of fantastic saves to keep them in it.

"John McGinn was exceptional and deserved his goal. He was the one player even in the first half trying to thread balls through and cut Queens open.

"We've only 19 fit players today and I would like to get at least one more player in certainly to bolster us."

Hibs face Ayr United at Easter Road next Saturday.

Queen of the South: Robinson, Marshall, Dowie, Brownlie, Rankin, Dobbie, Jacobs, Thomson, Thomas, Mercer, Carmichael.
Subs: Hamill, Higgins, Lyle, Atkinson, Dykes, Murray, Bell

Hibs: Laidlaw, Gray, Fontaine, McGinn, Fyvie, Holt, Stevenson, Keatings, Shinnie, McGregor, Cummings. Subs: Gallacher, McGeouch, Boyle, Forster, Humphrey, Graham, Crane

Referee Steven McLean

Attendance 3007