

# Hibs move seven points clear at top of Championship



Hibs moved seven points clear at the top of the Championship despite being unable to beat John 'Yogi' Hughes' Raith Rovers at Starks Park this afternoon.

Head Coach Neil Lennon made two changes to his starting XI that drew with Hearts last weekend with Liam Fontaine and Brian Graham replacing the injured Jordon Forster and Grant Holt,

With injuries to Dylan McGeouch and a suspension for Andrew Shinnie, Lennon was forced to list three youngsters on the bench.

Hughes was given a standing ovation from the home fans as he took his place in the dugout before the game.

Neither team created any clear cut chances in a hard fought first half although former Hearts' midfielder Ryan Stevenson tested Ofir Marciano with a powerful 25 yard free kick.

At the other end Kyle Benedictus and Jean-Yves M'Voto kept Jason Cummings and former Raith Rovers' striker Brian Graham at bay.

In the 52nd minute, Stevenson gave the hosts the lead with a superb half-volley from 25 yards out which flew into the top corner of the net leaving Marciano with no chance.

Chris Humphrey replaced Fraser Fyvie as Hibs fought back and the visitors grabbed a deserved equaliser when Cummings fired a sensational free kick into the top corner of the net from just outside the area to the delight of the large travelling support.

From then on it was one way traffic with Graham and Cummings both going close.

Grant Holt replaced Graham with ten minutes remaining and in time added on he appeared to be fouled inside the area but despite protests from players and fans the referee waved play on and the game ended all square.

With Dundee United in cup action and Morton drawing with Falkirk, Hibs boosted their chances of automatic promotion however their performance did not impress Lennon.

After the game, the furious Head Coach told BBC Scotland: "We were an absolute disgrace – a disgrace,

"We had the right colour (yellow) of jersey on today. You can't turn up and play for 30 minutes. We were abject.

"We are going for a title here and trying to extend our lead but we totally disrespected the opponent. I am not happy with that at all, and that is creeping in far too often."

"We will be alright against Hearts. They will raise their game against Hearts but that is not the priority.

"Don't tell me we've got good players here – yeah, we have, but they have to be consistent. The overall performance, the lack of physicality, belief and urgency, we just never turned up and played tippy-tappy football. Against a better opponent we would have got done today.

"I thought they had learned their lesson from the home draw against Ayr United.

"We can raise our game for Hearts at Tynecastle, where we played strongly and concentrated and were physical, but there was none of that today until the last half-hour, when we were excellent.

"You can't give a team an hour start and a goal up at any

level. I am not happy. It may be immaturity. The boys have got to take it on board. It wasn't good enough last season. We lost eight games last season.

"And they are going out with the same attitude that yeah, we can play good football. We can't. I know a good football team. I know what they can do.

"They have to earn the right to do that and we didn't. We played like strangers out there. No-one took any responsibility. It may seem like harsh words but I'm the manager. I have to set standards and I will have to look at my own performance as well. I didn't expect that."

"They will all want to play (against Hearts) They didn't want to play today, some of them.

"So if they are not in the team for Wednesday they can knock on my door all they want. I will just show them the first hour of the game."