

Hibs remain seven points clear after 2-2 draw with Dunfermline



Hibs remain seven points clear at the top of the Championship tonight but they have goalkeeper Ofir Marciano to thank for producing two sensational saves which secured what could be a valuable point against Dunfermline.

Neil Lennon made two changes to the starting XI that knocked Hearts out of the Scottish cup on Wednesday with Fraser Fyvie replacing Marvin Bartley and and Andrew Shinnie taking over from the injured Chris Humphrey.

Hibs started brightly and David Gray set up Grant Holt but the striker was flagged offside then Jason Cummings had a chance but was crowded out by the Dunfermline defenders.

The hosts opened the scoring in the 5th minute when John McGinn won possession in midfield before slipping the ball to Shinnie who found Cummings on the right wing. The youngster sent an inch perfect cross to the back post and Martin Boyle was on hand to hammer the ball into the net from close range.

Holt then flicked the ball into the path of Cummings but his shot was well saved by Stewart Murdoch then Shinnie showed some nice skill on the left wing before cutting along the byeline but his shot went well over the bar.

Hibs added a second in the 23rd minute after Boyle was brought down inside the area by Jason Talbot and Cummings sent the resultant penalty kick past Murdoch into the right hand corner of the net.

Two minutes later Paul McMullen pulled one back after a

mistake by Gray and moments later Liam Fontaine was forced to leave the field with an ankle injury.

Bartley replaced him in the heart of the defence then before the break McGinn and Fyvie were both booked for reckless challenges and Kallum Higginbotham was wrongly shown a yellow card after a stramash in the middle of the field.

The Pars equalised within seconds of the restart when Higginbotham was left with too much room in the box and he fired a powerful drive low into the corner of the net from an acute angle.

Dunfermline then almost took the lead when Moffat's strike rebounded off the bar into the path of Nicky Clark but Marciano produced a fantastic save with his feet to keep the scores level.

Higginbotham should then have been sent off for a reckless challenge on Shinnie but incredibly referee John Beaton did not even speak to him.

McMullan produced a fine piece of skill inside the area before firing the ball across the face of the goal but it hit Clark and went over the bar.

Lennon replaced Fyvie with debutant Callum Crane and moved Bartley back to midfield before Marciano produced yet another great save from a Clark header as the Pars looked to grab a winner.

It was Hibs who finished the stronger however and Murdoch did well to save a long range effort from McGinn.

Andy Geggan was booked for a reckless challenge on Lewis Stevenson who was also shown a yellow card for his reaction.

Beaton spoke to Lennon on the touchline about his protests then in the final minute James Keatings sent a low cross into the six yard box which just eluded Holt and Murdoch was able to

gather.

Hibs face St Mirren on Wednesday with at the moment only one fit central defender.

Hibs: Marciano, Gray, Stevenson, McGregor, Fontaine, Fyvie, McGinn, Shinnie, Boyle, Holt, Cummings. Subs: Laidlaw, Keatings, Bartley, Graham, Crane, Martin, Donaldson

Dunfermline: Murdoch, Geggan Morris, Ashcroft, Talbot, McMullan, Herron, Wedderburn, Higginbotham, Moffat, Clark. Subs: Fordyce, Paton, Hopkirk, Cardie, McCabe, Reilly, Hutton.

Referee John Beaton

Attendance 14,437