

Hibs remain 10 points clear after ill-tempered encounter ends goalless



Hibs remain ten points clear of second placed Morton after an ill-tempered goalless draw tonight which ended with two players and both managers being shown red cards.

Head Coach Neil Lennon made four changes to the starting XI that beat Falkirk on Saturday.

Ofir Marciano and John McGinn both returned from international duty, replacing Ross Laidlaw and Dylan McGeouch respectively whilst Paul Hanlon replaced Jordon Forster and goal-scorer James Keatings took over from the injured Andrew Shinnie.

Hibs almost took the lead in the opening minute when Martin Boyle beat three defenders before passing to McGinn who fired in a powerful strike which rebounded off the post to Keating on the left side of the box. His low cross just evaded Jason Cummings.

Morton then had three consecutive corner kicks but the Hibs' defence stood firm.

Both teams had chances as play raged from end to end at 100mph.

Lewis Stevenson's long ball found Cummings inside the area but he was well marshalled and the ball fell to McGinn who lobbed a delicate pass back into his path but the youngsters strike hit the keeper and went out for a corner.

Darren McGregor almost gave Hibs the lead with a header but Derek Galston managed to save on the line.

Hibs were dominating possession but Morton always looked dangerous on the break and Thomas O'Ware headed just over the bar then Michael Tidster's shot from the edge of the area went over the bar.

A long throw by Efe Ambrose caused problems for the Morton defence but McGinn's header floated inches past the post.

Marvin Bartley was booked just before the break for a foul on Aiden Nesbitt.

Hibs continued to attack and a great run from McGinn was halted unfairly on the edge of the box by Ricki Lamie but Cummings free kick flew over the bar.

There was controversy on the hour mark when Galston rushed from his box and caught McGinn's through ball outside the area however to the fury of the Hibs' fans referee Nick Walsh waved play on.

Moments later Grant Holt was replaced by Brian Graham as Hibs pressed for a winner.

The substitution almost paid dividends when Graham managed to get his head to a Stevenson cross but the ball flew inches wide.

In time added on, Morton substitute Kudus Oyenuga was sent off for a reckless challenge on Forster right in front of the dug out. McGregor ran toward the striker who immediately fell to the ground holding his face as players and staff from both teams took part in a mass brawl.

When the dust settled, the referee consulted his assistant then showed red cards to McGregor, Neil Lennon and Jim Duffy.

From the resultant free kick, Graham headed the ball into the path of Keatings who fired over the bar and the game ended all square.

The referee left the field to a chorus of boos.

After the game Lewis Stevenson said: " At the end of the day I don't think a point is a bad result for us."

Neil Lennon confirmed that Hibs will appeal McGregor's red card.

Hibs: Marciano, Hanlon, Bartley, McGinn, Holt, Stevenson, Boyle, Keatings, McGregor, Ambrose, Cummings. Subs: Laidlaw, Fyvie, McGeouch, McLean, Forster, Graham, Martin

Morton: Gaston, Lamie, O'Ware, Doyle, Oliver, Forbes, Lindsay, Nesbitt, Tidser, Russell, Murdoch. Subs: McGowan, Oyenuga, Scullion, Shankland, Donnelly, Tiffoney, Strapp

Referee Nick Walsh

Attendance 15,149