

James Keatings believes winning goal was most important of his career



James Keatings believes that his sensational strike on Saturday was the most important goal of his career to date and he revealed that he has his opponents to thank for making his mind up.

With the scores level, Keatings latched onto a knockdown from Brian Graham before cutting in from the left and curling in inch perfect shot into the top corner of the net, sparking mayhem in the stadium.

The fact that he did so with his 'wrong' foot only added to the praise he received from the fans and many believe that was the moment automatic promotion was as good as secured.

Hibs are now ten points ahead of Morton who are the only side with a realistic hope of catching Neil Lennon's side and the pair meet on Wednesday night at Easter Road.

Speaking after the game, Keatings said: "It was as good and as important a goal as I've scored in my career, but I am just delighted for the manager and the team that we've taken the three points.

"It's a massive result for us, coupled with Morton losing, but you can't take anything for granted in this league because points can be dropped anywhere so we will try to remain focused for Wednesday night.

"It was strange because every time I got the ball I was going to the byline and the last time two Falkirk players doubled up on me.

“I heard the Falkirk players saying ‘He’s all left foot’, and it really stuck in my head. I don’t know who it was, but they were saying I was all left-sided.

That made my mind up, the next time I got the ball I went on my right and caught it with my bad foot and it’s flown in.

“I couldn’t believe it and I don’t think they could believe it either.

“I am just delighted for the manager and the team that we took the three points.

“It’s another massive game for us. They have been on a great run and they are right up there. It’s up to us to up our performance again.

“Hopefully we can get three more points and build a bigger gap between us and the rest.”

Keatings came on as a substitute for the injured Andrew Shinnie just before the break and not only did he score the winner, it was his cross that led to the opener from Efe Ambrose.

He continued: “the manager told me to go on dead balls and put deliveries in. Big Efe got his head on it and put it in the net.”

The victory more than made up for his poor performance in last weeks 2-2 draw with Dumbarton which saw him return to the bench.

He added: “I couldn’t argue with the manager leaving me out. I drove home from the Dumbarton game with my dad, who is the worst person I could go home with after having a bad game.

“I was dreading it. I thought he may tie me up and put me in the boot!

“There were barely any words said, but I told him it was my worst game since I signed for Hibs.

“He sometimes says I’m too hard on myself when I play well, but I didn’t do myself justice and I could have no arguments at being out of the side.”

The one minus was the Falkirk equaliser which arrived within a minute of Hibs opener and Keatings was honest enough to admit that the goal was his fault.

“I was kicking myself when they scored because Craig Sibbald was my runner from the corner. I said straight away when I came in the it was my mistake at the corner. Luckily I managed to redeem myself.”