

# Hibs remain nine points clear with four games remaining



Once again Hibs were denied three points after conceding a second half penalty kick however with results elsewhere going in their favour it now looks inconceivable that Easter Road won't be hosting top flight football next season.

The main talking point ahead of the game was the confrontation between Neil Lennon and Jim Duffy the last time the teams met however the pair exchanged friendly handshakes before kick off.

Darren McGregor was eligible to play after the red card he received the last time the pair met was reduced to a yellow.

The Hibs' Head Coach was greeted with a chorus of boos from the home fans and cheers from the large travelling support as he took his place in the dugout.

Lennon made one change to the starting XI that drew with Dunfermline last weekend. Skipper David Gray returned from injury and took his normal position at right back with Efe Ambrose moving to his preferred role at centre back. Brian McLean had to be content with a place on the bench.

Hibs started brightly and Jason Cummings had the ball in the net in the third minute but the goal was disallowed as Dylan McGeouch was deemed to have committed a foul in the build up.

John McGinn then passed up a good chance to open the scoring after latching on to a knockdown from Brian Graham, but his effort went just past the post.

Hibs were denied a clear penalty when Martin Boyle's shot was blocked by Mark Russell's hands but referee Bobby Madden waved

play on. The fact that an almost identical 'handball' by Lewis Stevenson last week resulted in a penalty kick being awarded only added to the supporters' anger.

Derek Gaston did well to save a long range effort from McGinn as Hibs dominated possession however Morton looked dangerous on the break and Ofir Marciano did well to clear an Aidan Nesbitt cross just before Lennon's men took a deserved lead.

Jamie Lindsay was waiting to come back onto the pitch after receiving treatment when Cummings curled a left foot shot into the bottom corner of the net from 12 yards. The Morton players protested but referee Bobby Madden waved away their appeals.

Brian Graham was only inches away with a header from a Dylan McGeouch cross as Hibs looked to expend their lead.

Jim Duffy introduced Jamie McDonagh for Michael Tidser and the substitution paid immediate dividends when the midfielder drove into the box and was brought down by Darren McGregor.

Fellow substitute Lawrence Shankland sent Marciano the wrong way and converted the penalty.

Hibs should have won the game moments later when Graham was sent clean through on goal by McGinn but he delayed his effort and the goalkeeper saved his shot

Morton sit 11 points behind and Dundee United 13 back although both have a game in hand.

After the game Lennon told BBC Scotland: "We got done by a referee.

"Russell puts two hands on the ball – it was as clear as day and the only people who didn't see it, or decide not to give a penalty, are the officials."

"I need to know what the handball rule is," he added. "The ref said he felt he couldn't give it because it was hit hard at

him.

“I am lost for words. I hate going on about officials but I’m unhappy with Bobby’s performance today, I thought he was very much pro-Morton in a lot of decisions and certainly that’s a big moment in the game as we could have been going in 2-0.

“It’s embarrassing that we have had five red cards, by the way not one bad tackle, and three have been rescinded.”

“We’re not ruthless enough. We have Jason Cummings, who is a superstar, and the rest aren’t ruthless enough in front of goal.

“We’ve had 13 draws now – 10 of them we should have won – but our inability to put the ball in the net or get across people and head balls in the net is the reason why we’re not promoted just yet.”

Morton: Gaston, Doyle. O’Ware, Larnie, Russell, Forbes, Murdoch, Tidser, Nesbitt, Oliver  
Subs: Kilday, Scullion, Shankland, McDonagh, Donnelly, McGowan, Tiffoney

Hibernian: Marciano, Gray, McGregor, Ambrose, Stevenson, Boyle, Bartley, McGinn, McGeuch, Graham, Cummings. Subs: Laidlaw, Fyvie, Holt, McLean, Keatings, Shinnie, Harris

Referee Bobby Madden

Attendance 4229