

All square at Dingwall but Hibs miss out on bonus point



Hibs trip to Dingwall ended goalless last night but Neil Lennon's men missed out on a Betfred Cup bonus point after losing 4-3 in the penalty shootout.

Lennon handed competitive debuts to Danny Swanson and the returning Steven Whittaker whilst Efe Ambrose replaced Liam Fontaine in the heart of the defence.

Hibs started off brightly and dominated the early possession with Swanson and Martin Boyle in particular causing the hosts problems down the flanks.

Simon Murray almost opened the scoring before Ofir Marciano did well to stop an Andrew Davies' header.

Lewis Stevenson hit the side netting then Murray fired just over the bar from the edge of the area.

Moments later John McGinn's powerful strike was well saved by Fox.

The County keeper was fortunate in the 70th minute when Boyle's effort slipped through his grasp but rolled agonisingly wide.

Boyle almost opened the scoring after latching onto an Oli Shaw through ball but Fox did well to block his shot then from the resulting corner skipper for the night Darren McGregor headed against the crossbar.

Whittaker missed the first penalty for Hibs before Marciano saved from Routis.

John McGinn, Boyle and Fraser Murray all scored for the visitors whilst Jim O'Brien, Alex Shalck and Marcus Fraser all netted for the hosts.

Oli Shaw's penalty was saved by Fox before Michael Gardyne scored the goal that gave Ross County a bonus point to extend their lead at the top of Group D.

After the game Lennon praised his players and told BBC Scotland: " I couldn't have asked any more of the team and I thought we were outstanding.

"I thought there was a gulf between the teams and we were in the ascendancy for the majority of the game."

"They had a couple of chances in the first half but we dominated the game in terms of chances and possession. I got everything I wanted from the game and we're still a work in progress.

"The squad's still a little bit thin and we're using some young players. But in terms of my senior players, they were magnificent: Swanson, Boyle, McGinn, Bartley and McGeouch; Ambrose came onto a game.

"Whittaker cruised through it and I've got a very good goalkeeper so all the signs are very encouraging."

Hibernian: Marciano, Whittaker, Ambrose, McGregor, Stevenson, Bartley, McGeouch (Shaw, 86), McGinn, Swanson (F. Murray, 77), Boyle, S. Murray (Graham, 68). Unused substitutes: Laidlaw, Porteous, Gray, Fontaine.

Attendance: 2,065. Away: 576