

# Honours even after pulsating 90 minutes at Easter Road



Hibs had to settle for a share of the points after surrendering a two goal lead to Motherwell in a pulsating game at Easter Road this afternoon.

A double from Anthony Stokes either side of half time looked to have secured the victory but Louis Moult scored twice in the second period to deny the hosts.

Head Coach Neil Lennon kept faith with the starting XI that drew with St Johnstone in Perth.

Over 17,000 fans inside the stadium created a fantastic atmosphere and the game was played at a frenetic pace.

Efe Ambrose suffered a head knock in the opening minute and required treatment.

Hibs started brightly and on-loan signing Brandon Barker caused Motherwell problems with his pace down the left wing, creating several chances.

In the 7th minute John McGinn set up Simon Murray but the strikers toe poke from close range went inches wide.

Hibs were denied a clear cut penalty moments later when Stokes was chopped down inside the box, but incredibly referee Barry Cook ignored the appeals,

Moments later Richard Tait was booked for a theatrical dive inside the Hibs penalty area as play raged from end to end.

Hibs took the lead in the 20th minute after Martin Boyle was bundled over inside the area by Charles Dunne after having

been put through by McGinn. This time the referee pointed to the spot although the decision looked soft.

Stokes sent keeper Trevor Carson the wrong way and calmly chipped the ball into the net. This was the first time that Hibs had taken the lead in a league game this campaign.

Motherwell fought back and Moulton missed two great chances to equalise, firstly with a free header from a corner then with a shot that rebounded off the bar.

Just before the break, the referee warned Lennon about his conduct following a complaint from the fourth official.

The visitors started the second half brightly and had a sustained spell of pressure before Hibs doubled their lead against the run of play with a contender for goal of the season.

Barker played a one-two with Stokes and drove into the box. His strike was blocked and Stokes pounced onto the loose ball and curled a superb shot into the top corner of the net with the outside of his right foot.

Stokes then set up Barker but his shot hit the side netting.

On the hour mark Ambrose suffered another head knock then on his return to action was harshly adjudged to have committed a foul. Substitute Craig Tanner sent the free kick into the six yard box and Moulton headed home from close range.

Deivydas Matulevicius replaced Simon Murray and Vykintas Slivka took over from Martin Boyle as Hibs looked to extend their lead.

In the 72nd minute Moulton struck again with a fine strike from the edge of the area to the delight of the large travelling support behind the goal.

Dylan McGeouch replaced Marvin Batley before the referee

infuriated the home fans when he awarded a free-kick against Paul Hanlon for no apparent reason.

With five minutes remaining Stokes was chopped down 25 yards from goal but after a well worked free-kick his effort was blocked.

Moments later Slivka was brought down in a similar position and on this occasion Stokes elected to shoot but his effort flew inches wide and the game ended all square.

Afterwards Neil Lennon said: It was inexcusable. I have a back four and goalkeeper who are very experienced but we didn't manage the game. I am not happy at all."

Hibs: Marciano, Gray, Whittaker, Hanlon, Bartley, McGinn, Murray, Boyle, Barker, Ambrose, Stokes. Subs: Laidlaw, Slivka, Matulevicius, McGeouch, Swanson, Stevenson, Porteous

Motherwell: Carson, Tait, Hartley, Cadden, McHugh, Moulton, Bowman, Rose, Dunne, Kipre, Campbell. Subs: Griffiths, Hammell, Grimshaw, Bigirimana, Plummer, Fisher, Tanner

Referee Barry Cook

Attendance 17, 335