

Aberdeen take all three points after pulsating 90 minutes at Easter Road



Aberdeen emerged victorious after a pulsating and often ill-tempered 90 minutes in front of a packed Easter Road this afternoon.

Neil Lennon kept faith with the starting XI that drew with champions Celtic in Glasgow two weeks ago.

Ross Laidlaw retained his place after Ofir Marciano was given 'paternity leave' following the recent birth of his son.

Both teams had early chances as play raged from end to end with no quarter asked or given in the tackles.

Lewis Stevenson was shown a yellow card for a mistimed challenge on Gary Mackay-Stevens in the 13th minute then Marvin Bartley was spoken to following a foul on Graeme Shinnie.

Kenny McLean was also warned about his future conduct.

Mackay-Stevens almost opened the scoring in the 19th minute after some great one touch football but Laidlaw did well to save his effort.

At the other end a similar passage of play from Hibs ended in a corner after Anthony Stokes' cross was cleared.

Steven Whittaker went close with a powerful header which was blocked then had another chance soon afterwards but his shot from 15 yards went just over.

Shinnie was booked for a cynical foul on John McGinn who was

breaking through the Aberdeen defence then five minutes later Anthony O'Connor was shown a yellow card for exactly the same offence.

Aberdeen finally broke the deadlock with an excellent goal in the 37th minute. McLean slid an inch perfect through ball into the path of Mackay-Stevens to slotted the ball past Laidlaw into the bottom corner of the net.

McGinn was booked just before the break for a foul on McLean although it looked as if he had got the ball.

Stokes went close in the 43rd minute after good work by McGinn.

Hibs started the second half brightly and Joe Lewis did well to save a half-volley from McGinn.

Shaw Logan was next to see a yellow card after chopping down Martin Boyle and Lewis did well to save Stokes' free kick.

Adam Rooney almost made it 2-0 with a hooked shot then Paul Hanlon produced a superb last ditch tackle to stop Mackay-Stevens during an Aberdeen break.

In the 65th minute Brandon Barker replaced the industrious Bartley as Hibs pressed forward looking for an equaliser.

The visiting fans claimed a penalty when Barker challenged Logan at the edge of the box but the referee waved away their claims.

With 15 minutes remaining, McGinn's long ball found Vykintas Slivka inside the area but his shot was blocked.

Hanlon headed the resultant corner just wide of the post then Slivka was replaced by Danny Swanson who took the field to a tremendous reception following his traumatic week.

Steven May was lucky to escape a red card following a terrible

challenge on Boyle and the 'Dons striker was immediately substituted.

From then on it was all Hibs with Swanson in particular causing problems for the Aberdeen defence.

With seven minutes remaining, Swanson latched onto a pass from Barker and beat three 'Dons defenders inside the box before his shot was blocked.

He then dribbled past Logan to the byeline but his low cross was palmed away by Lewis.

With five minutes remaining Simon Murray replaced Stokes who has been suffering from a virus all week.

Five additional minutes were added on but the visitors defended stoutly and saw the game out to take all three points.

After the game Lennon said: "I'm frustrated. I thought we were excellent but in front of goal we were poor. We had 16 attempts at goal but I can't be over critical of the team today. I'm not going to lambast them but I want more."

Hibs face Celtic at Hampden Park next Saturday then Hearts in the first Edinburgh derby the following Tuesday.

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

Aberdeen: Lewis, Logan, Shinnie, O'Connor, McLean, Rooney, Mackay-Steven, Arnason, McKenna, Christie, May Subs: Rodgers, Reynolds, Stewart, Maynard, Wright, Ball, Ross

Referee Steven McLean

Attendance 19,033