

Brave Hibs suffer narrow defeat to Celtic at Parkhead



Brave Hibs returned empty handed from Parkhead despite a fighting performance against champions Celtic this afternoon.

Head Coach Neil Lennon made one change to the starting XI that beat Dundee in midweek with youngster Oli Shaw replacing Simon Murray up front. Once again there was no place in the squad for Anthony Stokes.

After a bright opening by the visitors, it was Celtic who almost opened the scoring but Ofir Marciano produced a superb save to deny Leigh Griffiths' well struck free kick from hitting the net.

From the rebound Scott Sinclair somehow hit the post from a yard out before Darren McGregor cleared the danger.

Brandon Barker passed up a great chance to equalise but former Hearts' keeper Craig Gordon did well to save his effort.

The home side eventually grabbed the opener in the 27th minute when former Hibs Griffiths fired home from a Keiran Tierney cross which Paul Hanlon failed to clear.

Lifelong Hibs' fan Griffiths did not celebrate the goal and was replaced by Moussa Dembele after leaving the field with a calf injury.

Gordon then picked up an injury just before the break in a clash with Efe Ambrose and failed to re-appear for the second half with Dorus de Vries taking over in goal.

Hibs had Celtic on the back foot for the majority of the second half but were unable to secure a share of the points.

Barker forced de Vries into a fine save with a powerful low strike then Lennon's men produced attack after attack but the Celtic defence held firm to grab the three points.

After the game Lennon told BBC Scotland: "I thought we were excellent, but we just lack a cutting edge at this top level.

"But those kind of players cost money. The difference in the game is Leigh Griffiths – that's why he's worth so much money to Celtic. He's a fantastic striker and they missed him when he went off, there's no question about that.

"But we were superb in the second half. We forced the game and had a lot of opportunities.

"To come here and force the issue like we did delights me but I don't think we had too many clear chances – apart from the Brandon Barker one-on-one in the first half.

"It's just that decision-making that's been letting us down but I've been saying that for a while. To change it costs money and that's something we just have to be patient with."

Celtic: Gordon (de Vries, 45), Simunovic, Brown, Griffiths (Dembele, 35), Sinclair, Boyata, Ntcham, Ajer, McGregor, Forrest (Kouassi, 71), Tierney. Unused substitutes: Bitton, Gamboa, Edouard, Miller.

Hibernian: Marciano, Ambrose, McGregor, Hanlon, Stevenson, Boyle (Murray, 55), Slivka, McGeouch, McGinn, Barker (Maclaren, 84), Shaw (Swanson, 69). Unused substitutes: Bain, Matulevicius, Rherras, Porteous.

Referee: Bobby Madden.