

Hibs settle for share of points after thrilling 90 minutes at Rugby Park



Hibs had to settle for a share of the points at Rugby Park this afternoon despite leading 2-0 after only eight minutes.

To make matters worse, both Kilmarnock goals were controversial and Neil Lennon was sent to the stand for complaining but in the end Steve Clarke's team totally dominated the second half and Hibs were fortunate to come away with the draw after a pulsating 90 minutes.

Lennon made one change to the starting XI that beat Aberdeen last weekend with youngster Ryan Porteous taking over from Paul Hanlon whose wife gave birth to a baby boy this morning.

In the absence of Hanlon and the injured David Gray, Darren McGregor captained the side.

Steven Whittaker who has been injured for several weeks returned to the bench.

A minute's applause took place before kick off in memory for Sir John Orr, former honorary president of the club who sadly passed away last week.

Hibs started the game at 100mph and opened the scoring in the 28th second after Lewis Stevenson's shot was deflected into

the path of Florian Kamberi who flicked the ball into the net from close range with the Killie defenders claiming offside. The goal, the fastest in the SPFL this season stood and TV replays showed that the referee was correct.

Moments later, Jamie MacLaren's strike was deflected over the bar and Porteous headed home Scott Allan's perfectly taken corner kick to double Hibs' advantage.

In the 10th minute, Martin Boyle's cross from the right was headed into MacLaren's path by Steven O'Donnell but the Australian couldn't get the ball under control and it bounced over the bar.

The hosts came back into the game however and Kris Boys went close with a header which flew just over the bar then Jordan Jones' shot was deflected just past the post with Ofir Marciano stranded.

Hibs should have wrapped things up in the 37th minute when Allan latched onto a great reverse pass from MacLaren and found Kamberi unmarked inside the box, but Jamie MacDonald saved his shot.

Just before the break, Porteous produced a superb last ditch tack to deny Rory McKenzie then Jones struck the post with a long range effort.

Kilmarnock started the second half strongly and pulled on back in the 56th minute with a wonder goal from Jones who curled the ball into the top corner from 20 yards. The goal however came from a short corner which was wrongly awarded.

Two minutes later Efe Ambrose was booked for a foul on Jones. Boyd took the free kick which hit the wall and rebounded to Alan Power. His shot was going well wide but it struck the elbow of Porteous and the referee pointed to the spot.

Boyd took the penalty which Marciano saved but the ball

rebounded into his path and he bundled the ball into the net from close range,

Referee Kevin Clancy then sent Lennon to the stand after the Hibs' Head Coach had complained to the fourth official. Lennon compounded the offence by sarcastically applauding the referee.

Oli Shaw replaced MacLaren and Allan was booked after handling the ball on the ground having been tripped from behind.

In the 68th minute, Marciano produced a world class save from Youssouf Mulumbu's deflected effort then from the resultant corner he did the same again, tipping the ball round the post.

Dylan McGeouch was then booked for a trip on Jones who was causing Hibs problems.

Lennon replaced Allan with the more defensively minded Marvin Bartley.

After a series of corners from Kilmarnock, Marciano was again on hand to save an Eamon Brophy strike. The keeper then required treatment for a leg injury but was able to carry on.

With Kilmarnock pushing forward Ambrose set up Shaw with a fine through ball but the youngster's effort went well wide.

Kamberi was the next Hibs player who required treatment after going over on his ankle but he was also able to carry on despite limping for the remainder of the game.

With two minutes remaining, Whittaker replaced Boyle and Hibs held on to secure the draw which leaves them 10 points clear of Hearts who visit Rangers at Ibrox later today.

Kilmarnock: MacDonald, O'Donnell, Broadfoot, Findlay, Taylor, Power, Mulumbu, Dicker, McKenzie, Jones, Boyd. Subs: Fasan, Kiltie, Wilson, Erwin, Brophy, Simpson, Tshibola

Hibs: Marciano, Ambrose, Porteous, McGregor, Stevenson, Boyle, McGeouch, McGinn, Allan, Kamberi, MacLaren. Subs: Bell, Whittaker, Bartley, Swanson, Rherras

Referee Kevin Clancy

Attendance 5348