

Hibs secure valuable three points with professional second half display



Hibs secured all three points with a professional second half display at a freezing cold Easter Road this afternoon.

Neil Lennon who watched the game from the stand made two enforced changes to the starting XI that drew with St Johnstone two weeks ago with Cammy Bell replacing Ofir Marciano and Marvin Bartley taking over from John McGinn.

Steven Whittaker and Vykintas Slivka returned from injury to make the squad.

Thistle started with Paul McGinn, brother of John and on-loan Hearts' striker Conor Sammon whilst former Hibs' full back Callum Booth had to be content with a seat on the bench.

The visitors had the best of the opening period without creating any clear cut chances.

In the 16th minute supporters of both sides took part in a one minute's applause to raise awareness of teenage suicide, in memory of Hibs' fan Daniel Johnston who sadly took his own life on 10 March.

Hibs almost took the lead in the 25th minute but Scott Allan's free kick just evaded Efe Ambrose.

Former Hibs keeper Tomas Cerny then produced a world class save to deny Martin Boyle but injured himself in the process and had to leave the field. He was replaced in goal by Ryan Scully and received a standing ovation from both sets of fans.

Lennon has been complaining about the standard of refereeing all week and nothing Andrew Dallas did this afternoon will have placated him and he left the field at half time to a chorus of boos after booking Marvin Bartley for no apparent reason.

Hibs started the second half brightly although Thistle often looked dangerous on the break and Bell did well to save from Sammon at point blank range.

Lewis Stevenson had the fans on their feet with several crunching tackles in midfield.

Bell required treatment for a head knock before Danny Devine was booked for denying a quick free kick. The centre half could have no complaints as he had been fouling Flo Kamberi for the majority of the game.

Thistle almost grabbed the lead following a misplaced pass back but Miles Storey fired the ball well over the bar.

Jamie MacLaren had the ball in the net in the 64th minute but his effort was ruled out for an infringement in the build up.

The visitors thought they had taken the lead moments later when a corner was headed goal wards but Bell produced a great save on the line. The ball was poked into the net by Devine

but to the relief of the home fans, the west stand linesman had his flag up.

Within a minute Hibs took the lead. Ambrose looked to have over-hit his through ball but Boyle used his speed to keep the ball in play before sending in a low cross which MacLaren fired into the net to the relief and delight of the home fans.

Four minutes later Paul Hanlon sent a looping header past Scully from Allan's corner to secure the victory.

Devine was sent off with five minutes remaining for chopping down substitute Oli Shaw.

Hibs continued to press forward and almost added to their lead but the Thistle defence held firm.

Hibs now face Hamilton on Tuesday night knowing that a win will take them to within one point of second placed Rangers.

Bell, Hanlon, Bartley, McGeouch, Stevenson, Boyle, MacLaren, Kamberi, Allan, McGregor, Ambrose. Subs: Dabrowski, Whittaker, Slivka, Swanson, Shaw, Murray, Porteous

Partick Thistle: Cerny, Cargill, Osman, Barton, Elliott, Devine, McGinn, Sammon, Edwards, McCarthy, Storey. Subs: Scully, Booth, Spittal, Doolan, Erskine, Lawless, Woods.

Referee Andrew Dallas

Attendance: 17,497