

Neil Lennon slams referee John Beaton for failing to protect his players



Neil Lennon was left furious by the refereeing of John Beaton during last night's 1-1 draw with St Johnstone in Perth.

The Hibs' Head Coach watched the game from the stand having been banned for three games following a protest against a penalty decision against Kilmarnock and judging by the performance of Beaton last night it was probably just as well.

The referee sent off Hibs' keeper Ofir Marciano after 14 minutes for handling the ball outside the penalty area and although the supporters were raging, Lennon felt that Beaton got that decision correct.

What really annoyed the Northern Irishman however was that Beaton failed to adequately punish a string of Saints fouls.

One 'challenge' in particular from Blair Alston should certainly have resulted in a red card. As John McGinn was breaking forward, Alston brought him down with the ball yards

away.

Everyone in the stadium along with the viewers on BT Sport anticipated a red card but unbelievably the referee who was only a few yards away decided that a yellow was sufficient.

After the game an angry Lennon told BBC Scotland: "It's a good job I was in the stand given how I felt about the referee's performance.

"Yes, he got the red card right, there's no question about it, but the decisions second-half, how they ended up with 11 men on the pitch is beyond me."

"The tackle from Alston is red card; it's cynical, it's reckless, it's endangering my player

"He gets a yellow and then, two minutes later, after the referee telling Paul Hanlon that he's on one more, he takes John down again and nothing's given. It beggars belief.

"My players were amazing tonight, it was a great game. We had to weather a bit of pressure in really demanding circumstances and I've nothing but praise for the players.

"We got off to a brilliant start and we shot ourselves in the foot with the red card really.

"It sounds like sour grapes again – I'm looking out for my players here.

"I get the red card for us, it's the right decision, so I support the referee on that. But I can't support some of the decisions he made second-half.

"Murray Davidson could easily have got a second yellow. In the end, Tommy took Alston off – why did he take him off?

"We try to play the game the right way and this isn't the first time I've asked for more protection from my players; this is maybe the third time.

“Some of the tackling is really, really dangerous – if you can call it tackling.

“The game’s live on TV, you guys watch the game and understand the game, you know when a bad tackle is a bad tackle. The only one who doesn’t seem to agree with us is the referee.

“Sometimes people say you have to respect the referee – I get that, but I can’t respect that decision, I really can’t, because it’s wrong.

“I’m not looking for the game to be evened up. I just want the rules of the game applied in the right way.

“That’s not a tackle – I know how to tackle and that is not a tackle”