

# Hearts end Hibs' dreams of second place finish with 2-1 win at Tynecastle



Hibs dreams of their first top two finish in over 40 years were dashed following a 2-1 defeat to Hearts at Tynecastle tonight.

Craig Levein rang the changes, restoring David Milinkovic, Danny Amankwaa, Harry Cochrane and Aaron Hughes to the team whilst Neil Lennon made one change to the starting XI that drew with Aberdeen last Saturday with Brandon Barker replacing Jamie MacLaren.

Steven Naismith was allowed to play despite being offered a two match ban by the compliance officer following his tackle on Celtic's Scott Brown on Sunday.

The game started at 100 mph with Hibs dominating the early possession.

In the 15th minute, John McLaughlin did well to hold a long range effort from Barker

Kyle Lafferty was fortunate to avoid a red card for a

reckless challenge on Lewis Stevenson and squaring up to Darren McGregor during the aftermath.

Hearts then had a penalty claim turned down after Naismith went down under a challenge from Efe Ambrose then a minute later the home side took the lead when Naismith set up Lafferty inside the box and the Northern Irishman toe poked the ball past Ofir Marciano into the net.

Hearts looked to extend their lead and only a superb last ditch tackle by McGregor prevented Harry Cochrane making it 2-0.

At the other end McLaughlin once again denied Barker as Hibs pressed for an equaliser.

Martin Boyle appeared to pull a hamstring and was replaced by Dylan McGeough who entered the field wearing a protective mask.

Just before the break, McLaughlin produced a fine save to deny Scott Allan.

Hibs started the second half brightly and were quickly awarded a penalty when Stevenson was tripped by Joaquim Adao inside the box.

Referee Craig Thomson had no hesitation in pointing to the spot and Florian Kamberi calmly sent McLaughlin the wrong way to make the score 1-1.

At that stage Hibs looked the more likely to score but instead Hearts regained the lead within nine minutes.

Paul Hanlon was adjudged to have fouled Lafferty and Cochrane's accurate free-kick was headed into the net by Naismith, sparking wild scenes from three sides of the stadium.

Maclaren replaced Hanlon then Vykintas Slivka took over from

Allan as Hibs threw caution to the wind.

Slivka picked the ball up in midfield and drove forward before finding Barker, but after a poor first touch he miscued his effort and the ball flew agonisingly over the bar.

McGregor won a header from a John McGinn corner and the ball fell to MacLaren but the Australian mishit his shot whilst off balance and McLaughlin easily saved.

A shoulder injury to Lafferty meant that six minutes were added on and McGregor passed up a late chance to equalise but he mishit his shot from 10 yards and Hearts held on to secure the victory.

Hibs can still potentially end up in third place but they would have to beat Rangers on Sunday by six goals.

Fourth place will be enough to guarantee a European place next season if Celtic beat Motherwell in the Scottish Cup final.

Heart of Midlothian: McLaughlin, Smith, Hughes, Berra, Amankwaa (Cowie, 69), Lafferty, Milinkovic (McDonald, 90), Naismith, Mitchell, Cochrane (Callachan, 84), Adao. Substitutes not used: J.Hamilton, Moore, Henderson, C.Hamilton.

Hibernian: Marciano, Ambrose, McGregor, Hanlon (Maclaren, 68), Boyle (McGeouch, 41), Whittaker, Allan (Slivka, 78), McGinn, Stevenson, Barker, Kamberi. Substitutes not used: Bell, Bartley, Swanson, Shaw.

Referee: Craig Thomson.

Attendance: 19,324. Away: 3,568.