

**Hibs European campaign
marches on with brave draw in
Greece**



Hibs' Europa League campaign continues after a nerve racking 95 minutes in Greece tonight.

After an impressive first half, Hibs went into the break with a deserved 1-0 lead thanks to a superb goal from John McGinn. Things improved shortly after the restart when Asteras were reduced to 10-men but the Greek side fought back and equalised moments later.

After that it was back to the walls for Neil Lennon's men and summer loan signing Adam Bogdan produced several great saves to give the thousand plus Hibs' fans a night to remember.

Lennon, who was forced to watch the game from the stand due to his extended ban made one change to the starting XI that won at Easter Road last week with skipper David Gray replacing Steven Whittaker.

Hibs started brightly and created the first real chance in the 13th minute when Vykintas Slivka found Martin Boyle but the winger's shot was blocked.

Stevie Mallen then had two attempts from free-kicks but the keeper saved both although he fumbled the second causing consternation in the Greek defence.



Hibs had a scare in the 33rd minute when Lewis Stevenson went down with no one near him after appearing to jar his knee. It looked as though the dependable left back would have to go off but thankfully he was able to recover.

The game burst into life in a dramatic two-minute spell just before the break. Asteras went close when Kosmas Tsilianidis headed against the bar from a corner kick then Hibs took a deserved lead after Florian Kamperi pounced on a mistake in the Asteras defence and set up John McGinn who fired a superb

strike into the corner of the net sparking wild scenes from the delighted travelling supporters.

Just after the restart , Michalis Manias found himself clean through on goal but Adam Bogdan denied him with a fine save. Manias then lunged to get the rebound but fouled Paul Hanlon and was rightly shown a second yellow card.

Hibs looked comfortable at that stage but moments later Kosmas Tsilianidis levelled with a superb strike which gave Bogdan no chance after some hesitation amongst the Hibs' defenders.

The goal seemed to galvanise the home supporters and from then on, Asteras mounted attack after attack.

In the 61st minute Bogdan produced a world class save from Giannis Kotsiras following an Asteras corner to keep the scores level and then continued with his 'man of the match' performance, saving twice from Anastasios Douvikas.

Two Asteras players were booked for late challenges on McGinn as they showed their frustration at being unable to break through the Hibs' defence.

Asteras then had a penalty claim after Tsilianidis went down in the penalty box after rounding Bogdan but the referee rightly waved away the appeals.

Although Asteras had the majority of possession, Hibs continued to look dangerous on the break and Kamberi went close with a shot from an acute angle.

The hosts ended the game with a series of corner kicks but the Hibs' defence held firm to secure a 4-3 aggregate victory.

Hibs now host Molde in the first leg of their tie next Thursday, before making the trip to Norway the following week.

Asteras Tripolis: Athanasiadas, Valiente, Triantafyllopoulos, Munafo, Manias, Bellocq, Iglesias, Tsilianidis, Kotsiras,

Kyriakopoulos. Subs; Papadopoulos, Rolle, Douvikas, Martinez, Christopoulos, Bastianos, Salas,

Hibs: Bogdan, Ambrose, McGregor, Hanlon, Gray, Mallan, Slivka, McGinn, Stevenson, Kamberi, Boyle. Subs: Laidlaw, Porteous, Whittaker, Martin, Bartley, Swanson, Shaw.

Referee Benoit Millot (France)

Photos courtesy of Hibs' fan Duncan Hotchkiss in Tripolis