

Hibs start league campaign in style with 3-0 victory over Motherwell



After their European success it was back to league business this afternoon for Hibs at Easter Road and they started the season in style with a superb 3-0 victory over last years Scottish Cup runners-up Motherwell.

Neil Lennon made three changes to the starting XI that drew with Asteras Tripolis on Thursday night.

Ryan Porteous replaced the injured Darren McGregor, whilst Marvin Bartley and Oli Shaw replaced Vyintas Slivka and Florian Kamberi who both dropped to the bench. New signing Jamie MacLaren was also listed amongst the substitutes.

Hibs dominated the early possession without troubling the Motherwell keeper to any great degree as both sets of supporters created a fantastic atmosphere.

Carl McHugh was lucky to escape a red card following a dreadful tackle on Bartley but after allowing the advantage referee Bobby Madden decided a yellow was sufficient.

Madden did not endear himself to the Hibs' fans by his over lenient approach to a number of 'borderline' Motherwell challenges.

John McGinn then set up Oli Shaw but the youngster's shot was blocked as Hibs started to pile on the pressure.

At the other end, the fans held their breath as Efe Ambrose, instead of clearing his lines decided to beat three opposition attackers inside his own penalty box before sliding a pass to Lewis Stevenson.

Hibs finally took a deserved lead in the 29th minute. The impressive Stevie Mallan tried a long-range effort which Pater Hartley blocked with his arm on the edge of the penalty box. The 'Well defender was booked and Mallan fired the resultant free kick into the bottom corner of the net.

Madden continued to frustrate the Hibs' fans with Martin Boyle in particular coming in for some harsh treatment from the Motherwell defenders.

Hibs added a second in the 44th minute after McGinn's excellent pass found Shaw at the back post and the teenager calmly slotted the ball into the net from an acute angle.

Just before the break Adam Bogdan did well to deny Chris Cadden who cut in from the right.

Motherwell made a double substitution at the start of the second half with Aaron Taylor-Sinclair and Liam Grimshaw being replaced by Elliot Frear and Gael Grimshaw.

McGinn almost made it 3-0 just after the restart but Trevor Carson palmed away his effort.

The third arrived five minutes later after a fantastic move down the left side with some excellent one touch football between McGinn, Stevenson and Boyle who cut inside and fired a powerful strike into the net from 22 yards.

Hibs then enjoyed a sustained spell of pressure, mounting attack after attack.

In the 63rd minute David Gray and Mallan were replaced by Slivka and MacLaren who entered the field to a standing ovation from the Hibs' fans.

Motherwell also replaced Curtis Main with Danny Johnson who almost pulled one back in dramatic fashion after latching not a slack pass from Boyle. His strike beat Bogdan but rebounded off the post back into his path. He then rounded the Hibs' keeper but Paul Hanlon produced a superb block to keep the score 3-0.

Motherwell had the better of the last 15 minutes as the Hibs' players understandably tired after their midweek match.

Shaw set up MacLaren with a fine through ball but Carson did well to save the Australian strikers first time effort.

Motherwell had the ball in the net moments later but Johnson's effort was ruled out for pulling in the build up.

Bogdan who had looked impressive throughout suffered an injury which prevented him taking goal-kicks but the keeper still commanded his box and set up another Hibs attack after finding Danny Swanson who earned a round of applause after a lung bursting 80 yard run.

In time added on, Bogdan ensured a clean sheet with a great save from Johnson. The ball rebounded to on-loan Hearts' striker Connor Sammon but his header flew harmlessly wide and Hibs held on to secure a well-deserved three points.

There is no rest for Lennon's men however as they are back in European action on Thursday night against Molde.

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

Motherwell: Carson, Tait, Taylor-Sinclair, McHugh, Cadden, Main, Grimshaw, Rose, Sammon, Donnelly. Subs: Gillespie, Frear, Bigirimana, Rodriguez, Johnson, Turnbull, Scott

Referee Bobby Madden

Attendance 17,494