

Late winner secures Betfred Cup quarter final place for Hibs



Hibs twice came from behind against a physical Ross County side at Easter Road today before finally securing a Betfred Cup quarter final place with a late goal from man of the match Daryl Horgan.

Neil Lennon made six changes to the starting XI that exited Europe on Thursday. Adam Bogdan, Paul Hanlon, Marvin Bartley, Vykintas Slivka, Jamie MacLaren and Florian Kamberi made way for Ross Laidlaw, David Gray, Scott Martin, Emerson Hyndman, Horgan and Oli Shaw whilst new on-loan signing Tomas Agyepong started on the bench.

Ross County started as they meant to go on with Iain Vigurs booked in the opening five seconds for chopping down Stevie Mallan inside the centre circle.

The visitors showed they could also play football though and opened the scoring in the 9th minute when Efe Ambrose headed clearance fell to Michael Gardyne whose volley flew through a forest of legs into the net with Laidlaw unsighted.

Hibs fought back and a fine one-two between Shaw and Martin Boyle ended with the winger testing Scott Fox.

The equaliser arrived in the 14th minute when Gray headed home from a superb cross by Horgan from the left wing.

Hibs then had a sustained spell of pressure and could have wrapped things but for an excellent goalkeeping display by Fox.

Boyle passed up a great chance after Martin put him clean through but Fox spread himself well to deny the winger.

Hyndman then set up Boyle but once again Fox produced a fine save. The keeper was in action moments later when Horgan's excellent cross struck Keith Watson's knee and diverted goalwards.

Ross Draper was booked for a dreadful foul on Lewis Stevenson and by this stage the Hibs' fans were letting referee Kevin Clancy know they were unhappy about his decision making.

Callum Morris was also booked just before the break after a Josh Mullin free-kick was headed into the path of Laidlaw and Morris tried to bundle the keeper and ball into the net, sparking a mini-stramash inside the net.

Steven Whittaker replaced Martin at half time and within minutes Ross County started time-wasting to the annoyance of the Hibs' fans.

Ryan Porteous was booked bringing down Ross Draper at the edge of the box and Laidlaw produced a superb save to deny Vigurs from the resultant free-kick.

Former Hearts' midfielder Don Cowie replaced the injured Jamie Lindsay and was lucky to escape a booking for a late barge on Whittaker.

The visitors continued to look dangerous on the break and were awarded a controversial penalty when Ambrose was adjudged to have tripped Declan McManus inside the area. Mullen's powerful strike from the spot flew past Laidlaw to the delight of the small band of travelling supporters.

MacLaren immediately replaced Hyndman and County passed up two good chances to add to their lead by Laidlaw did well to keep the deficit at one goal.

County continued to waste time and referee Clancy sparked fury for awarding a goal kick after Shaw's effort was clearly deflected over the bar.

Hibs were level moments later when Mallan picked up the ball in midfield before unleashing a dipping shot which deceived Fox from 30 yards.

Cowie was booked for a cynical foul on the impressive Horgan then Callum Morris chopped down Boyle but Clancy took no action other than to award the free-kick.

By now the time wasting was persistent and ignored by the referee to the fury of the fans.

In time added on with extra time looming, Hibs grabbed the winner when Horgan picked up the ball in midfield, feigned to shoot then cut in from the right before curling a sublime strike into the bottom corner of the net to the relief and delight of the home fans.

Hibs now face Aberdeen in the quarter finals of the Betfred Cup.

Hibs: Laidlaw, Gray, Ambrose, Porteous, Stevenson, Martin, Mallan, Hyndman, Horgan, Boyle, Shaw. Subs: Dabrowski,

Whittaker, Hanlon, Swanson, Slivka, Agyepog, MacLaren.

Ross County: Fox, Fraser, Kelly, Morris, Draper, Gardyne, Lindsay, McManus, Vigurs, Mullen, Watson. Subs: Munro, McKay, Demetriou, Keillor-Dunn, Graham, Dingwall, Cowie

Referee Kevin Clancy.

Attendance 8,452