

Hibs back in the top six after victory in Dundee



Hibs leap-frogged St Johnstone and Motherwell to move into the top six following a comfortable 4-2 away victory over Dundee at Dens Park tonight.

Paul Heckingbottom kept faith in the same starting XI that beat Hamilton last Saturday.

After an even opening spell Dundee were denied a penalty when Mark Milligan appeared to hold Ryan McGowan whilst defending a corner but referee John Beaton waved away their appeals.

Hibs took the lead when Marc McNulty sent a superb through ball into the path of strike partner Florian Kamberi who outmuscled Genseric Kusunga before firing a powerful effort into the net.

McNulty almost doubled Hibs advantage moments later but his volley was tipped over by Dundee keeper Seny Dieng.

The hosts equalised when Scott Wright held off three Hibs

defenders and chipped the ball into the path of Paul McGowan who clipped it past Ofir Marciano.

Hibs regained the lead within minutes when Kamberi took a quick throw in which allowed Daryl Horgan space to run into the box before squaring the ball to McNulty who scored from two yards.

Dundee started the second half brightly and almost levelled the score but Marciano produced a world class save to deny Andy Hales.

McGowan was booked for cynically wrestling McNulty to the ground as he broke free and received a boot in the face for his trouble in the aftermath.

Hibs made it 3-1 when Stevie Mallan ghosted in from the left and fired a powerful strike that Dieng could only parry into the path of McNulty who bundle the ball into the net.

Mallan then added a spectacular fourth with a 25-yard strike which flew into the top corner of the net.

Heckingbottom's men then took their foot off the gas and substitute Kenny Miller twice had the ball in the net but both efforts were ruled out for offside.

Dundee pulled one back through Martin Woods but Hibs finished the stronger and secured the three points.

After the game Heckingbottom told BBC Radio Scotland: "The win is the most important thing. Dundee have really hit a bit of form and been hard to play against.

"The message is we want to be positive and want to score goals. It actually made the game harder for us second-half, but I have to accept that consequence of the message – go and be positive, go and be brave. But really, there were opportunities at 4-1 where we didn't have to always try, we could have kept the ball and took the sting out the game.

"I'll continue doing that because it's important to have that sort of bravery for the longer term.

"Whenever they put that effort in and give performances like that, I have to accept mistakes because I'm probably pushing them further than they're capable of, making them uncomfortable, but that's what it takes.

"So I'll stick up for them and their mistakes when they put in a shift like that."

Mallan told BBC Radio Scotland: "That's the position the manager wants me to pick up, in those little pockets where I can turn and have a strike. The third goal was a better opportunity for me to score but I'm glad we've got a striker like Marc McNulty to get in about the box and score.

"I feel fit, I feel I'm playing well, the team's on a high, you're going to have that little kick on when a new manager comes in.

"Top six is the main priority. We're here now and now it's whether we're capable of staying here. We know we can. Going away to St Johnstone on Wednesday is one of the hardest places to go in the league. If we keep what we're doing, we can go there and get a win.

"The goals are coming back from open play – that was a big thing I felt we needed – and we're getting more stability at the back."

Dundee: Dieng, Ralph, Woods, Kusunga, Wright, R. McGowan, Dales (O'Sullivan 64'), P. McGowan (Robson 64'), C. Curran (Miller 55'), J. Curran, Horsfield. Substitutes not used: Parish, Kerr, O'Dea, Hadenius.

Hibernian: Marciano, Gray, Hanlon, Milligan, Horgan (Omeonga 61'), Slivka, McNulty (Shaw 64'), Mallan, Stevenson, Kamberi, McGregor. Substitutes not used: Bogdan, Nelom, Bigirimana,

Mackie, Allan.

Referee: John Beaton. Attendance: 6450.