

Controversial penalty denies Hibs point at Rugby Park



A controversial penalty kick that even Kilmarnock manager Steve Clarke described as 'soft' was enough to deny Hibs a share of the points at Rugby Park this afternoon.

The result means that Hibs will have to wait until next week to mathematically ensure a fifth place finish and the Edinburgh bragging rights of being the highest placed club in the league.

Head Coach Paul Heckingbottom made two changes to the starting XI that lost at Ibrox with Daryl Horgan and Ryan Gauld making way for Fraser Murray and Florian Kamberi.

Kilmarnock dominated early possession, but Hibs created the first real chance after Marc McNulty and Murray combined to set up an opening for Stephane Omeonga whose shot was well saved by Daniel Bachmann. At the other end Greg Taylor's miscued cross hit the crossbar before,

Ofir Marciano produced a superb save from Gary Dicker's header.

In the 31st minute the hosts were awarded a controversial penalty when David Gray tangled with Alex Bruce as a corner came in from the right. It looked as though Bruce was the

instigator but referee Andrew Dallas pointed to the spot.

The Hibs' captain protested and was booked before Eamon Brophy fired home the resultant spot kick.

In the 55th minute Youssouf Mulumbu brilliantly played Brophy through one-on-one with Marciano, but the goal scorer fired just wide.

Heckingbottom made a triple substitution with Omeonga, McNulty and Kamberi making way for Oli Shaw, Thomas Agyepong and Horgan.

In the dying minutes Hibs almost snatched an equaliser when Agyepong's powerful effort was tipped over the bar by Bachmann and Kilmarnock held on to secure the three points.

After the game Heckingbottom told BBC Scotland: "It's not a penalty. That's not the reason we lost the game, we lost the game because we were rubbish. There's nothing more to say. We looked like a team that had nothing to play for."

Kilmarnock manager Steve Clarke said: "We should have won more comfortably. We were the better team and deserved to win. I've just seen [the penalty] there, it was soft. But sometimes you deserve a refereeing decision to go in your favour."

Kilmarnock: Bachmann, O'Donnell, Bruce, Findlay (Boyd 87), Taylor, Mulumbu, Dicker, Power, Burke (Millar 79), Brophy (McAleny 79), McKenzie. Substitutes not used: MacDonald, Ndjoli, Waters, Millen.

Hibs: Marciano, Gray, McGregor, Hanlon, Stevenson, F. Murray, Mallan, Milligan, Omeonga (Horgan 65), Kamberi (Agyepong 65), McNulty (Shaw 65). Substitutes not used: Bogdan, Bartley, Gauld, Spector.

Referee: Andrew Dallas. Attendance: 7484.