

Scott Allan strike secures valuable three point for Hibs



A superb Scott Allan strike ensured that Hibs started the 2019/20 season with a home victory against St Mirren at Easter Road this afternoon.

Head Coach Paul Heckingbottom made five changes to the starting XI that faced Newcastle United last Tuesday.

Out went Darren McGregor, Sean Mackie, Fraser Murray, Vyktas Slivka and Oli Shaw, replaced by Steven Whittaker, Adam Jackson, Josh Vela, Daryl Horgan and Scott Allan.

There was Sunshine on Leith when the game kicked off and both sides had chances in an evenly contested first half.

Super John McGinn's brother Paul had a great chance but skipper Paul Hanlon produced a superb last ditch tackle to keep the score level.

Ofir Marciano produced a fantastic acrobatic save to deny Ilkay

Durmus in the 31st minute before Gary Mackenzie did well to reach the ball before Florian Kamberi after good work by Horgan.

Vaclav Hladky produced a fine save from Whittaker's powerful strike then just before the break Durmus should have scored when he received the ball unmarked inside the area but his strike flew well over the bar.

In time added on Sean Mackie replaced the injured Tom James.

Hibs started the second half brightly and almost went ahead when Scott Allan lobbed the keeper but the ball rebounded off the inside of the post.

The home fans celebrated when Newell's header beat Hladky then rebounded into the path of Kamberi who fired the ball into the net from close range however the linesman's flag was controversially raised.

The Buddies were content to hit on the break and Marciano did well to save from Tony Andreu and Kyle Magennis.

The home supporters became restless particularly with the time-wasting tactics of Jim Goodwin's men.

Hibs almost took the lead in the 69th minute when Kamberi latched onto a sublime through ball from Allan. His strike was parried by Hladky into the path of substitute Christian Doidge but the

ball got stuck
under his feet and he was unable to convert the chance.

With six minutes remaining Hibs took the lead when Allan controlled a Doidge first time pass, beat two defenders and fired an unstoppable strike into the bottom corner of the net, sparking a mixture of delight and relief from the home supporters.

Doidge missed a great chance to wrap things up two minutes later after good work from Kamberi, but the striker mishit his shot from two yards out and the ball went well wide.

In time added on Saints' substitute Jonathan Obika volleyed over from close range and Hibs held on to secure three valuable points.

Hibs travel to Ibrox next week to face Rangers.

After the game Heckingbottom told BBC Scotland: "We're a work in progress and will be for a long, long time, but you can't question the commitment and desire to keep going.

"After hitting the post a couple of times, goal disallowed, other chances, you're thinking it's not going to be our day. But I'm encouraged that we won, kept on playing and passing and the nature of the goal was reward for that because it was patience."

Hibs: Marciano, Whittaker, Hanlon, Vela (Doidge 64'), Horgan (Slivka 64'), Newell, Mallan, James (Mackie 45'), Jackson, Kamberi, Allan. Substitutes not used: Maxwell, McGregor, Shaw, Murray.

St Mirren: Hladky, McGinn, McLoughlin, Mackenzie, Magennis,

Flynn, Andreu (Djorkaeff 73'), Durmus (Breadner 70'), Foley, Mullen (Obika 54'), Macpherson. Substitutes not used: Lyness, Baird, Erhahon, McAllister.

Referee: Euan Anderson.

Attendance: 16,631.