

Hibs back at Hampden after victory over Kilmarnock



Hibs reached the semi-finals of the Betfred League Cup last night after a dramatic penalty shoot-out victory over Kilmarnock at Rugby Park.

Under-fire Head coach Paul Heckingbottom made three changes to his starting XI with Jason Naismith, Flo Kamperi and Scott Allan making way for Tom James, Glenn Middleton and Christian Doidge.

In an evenly fought contest, neither side created any real chances of note.

On-loan winger Glenn Middleton looked determined to show the fans what he is capable of as Hibs tried to push forward.

The hosts almost took the lead early in the second half when Harvey St. Clair's cross from the left almost caught Chris Maxwell out.

Allan and Oli Shaw replaced the tiring Horgan and Middleton and the youngster almost made an instant impact with a looping header but Laurentiu Branesu tipped the ball over the bar.

The on-loan Juventus keeper did well to a header from Doidge

before Eamonn Brophy almost caught Maxwell out.

Joe Newell took over from Melker Hallberg in the 84th minute and the game ended goalless.

In the dying minutes of extra time Ryan Porteous was sent off after preventing a counter attack.

Allan scored Hibs first penalty but Shaw missed the second. Stevie Mallan, Paul Hanlon, Tom James and Joe Newell all scored whilst while O'Donnell struck the post for Kilmarnock ahead of Maxwell's decisive save from Niko Hamalainen.

After the game Heckingbottom told BBC Scotland: They've turned a corner.

"We went the long way round, but I think it was deserved. I'm delighted we can send the fans home happy because they're in it with us. It's what they deserve as well.

"We were strong, resilient, and we knew we had to be, because Kilmarnock don't give very much away."

"I just hope it lets the players understand what we're talking about when we're talking about hard work, not giving anything away, being resilient and tough, that they can see that and get rewards from that.

"At the start of the season it was that, then there was a three-game stretch when we were weak. Then the last couple of games we've been punished.

"I'm looking forward to [the semi-final] but that's further down the line. We've got two huge game against teams

who finished above
us last year so we know it's going to be a tough test."

Hibs face Celtic in the semi-final.

Kilmarnock: Branescu, O'Donnell, Del Fabro, Findlay,
Hamalainen, Power, Dicker, Burke (McKenzie 86), El Makrini
(Thomas 94), St.
Clair (Millar 62), Brophy (Sow 89). Unused substitutes:
Koprivec, Bruce,
Hendrie.

Hibernian: Maxwell, James, Porteous, Hanlon, Stevenson,
Middleton (Allan 63), Mallan, Hallberg (Newell 84), Vela,
Horgan (Shaw 63),
Doidge (Jackson 119). Unused substitutes: Marciano, Whittaker,
Kamberi.

Referee: William Collum.

Crowd: 4780.