

Late equaliser from Martin Boyle secures share of points



Ladbrokes Scottish Premiereship – Hibernian v Livingston.
Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.
30/10/2019.

Pic shows: Hibs' winger, Martin Boyle, fires home the equaliser as Hibs play host to Livingston at Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

A last minute equaliser from Martin Boyle secured a share of the points and possibly Head Coach Paul Heckingbottom's job as Hibs came from behind to draw with Livingston tonight.

Heckingbottom made four changes to the side that drew with Ross County on Saturday with Daryl Horgan, Tom James, Glenn Middleton and

Christian Doidge replacing Josh Vela, Joe Newell, Jason Naismith and Florian Kamberi.

Fans' favourite Boyle was listed as a substitute after being side-lined due to an injury picked up at the start of the season.

Former Hibs' midfielder Marvin Bartley received a warm welcome on his return to Easter Road.

Livingston started brightly and almost took the lead in the first minute after Scott Pittman's shot beat Chris Maxwell but James was on hand to clear the ball off the line.

Hakeem Odoffin then went close with a half-volley which flew just wide of the post.

Keeper Matjia Sarkic did well to save from Glenn Middleton as Hibs fought back and Lithgow cleared a Horgan strike off the line.

James almost opened the scoring with a superb long-range strike after a cleverly worked corner kick but Sarkic produced a sensational save to deny the full-back.

From the resultant corner kick James's shot struck Odoffin on the shoulder but referee Gavin Duncan waved away the Hibs' players appeals.

The visitors took the lead in the 37th minute after Steve Lawless' shot deflected off Paul Hanlon into the net.

Three minutes later Livingston doubled their lead when Craig Sibbald won possession inside the penalty box and curled the ball past Maxwell.

The half-time whistle was greeted with a chorus of booing from the frustrated Hibs' fans.

Kamberi replaced Middleton at the interval and Scott Allan latched onto a Doidge's knock down but the linesman's flag was up to spoil the celebrations.

Hibs' pulled one back on the hour mark when Bartley was adjudged to have brought down Allan inside the area and the popular midfielder fired the resultant penalty kick high into the top corner of the net.

Hanlon went close with a powerful header from Stevie Mallan's cross but the ball flew agonisingly just over the bar.

Livingston almost secured the three points in the 75th minute when Mallan's back pass was intercepted by substitute Scott Tiffoney who rounded Maxwell but shot wide of the open goal.

Moments later Boyle replaced Melker Hallberg and received a standing ovation from the home fans.

Horgan should have equalised after latching onto a cut back from Hanlon but his first time strike flew straight at the keeper.

Hibs continued to press forward and Allan set up Kamberi with a superb through ball but Sarkic bravely saved at the strikers feet.

Kamberi limped back onto the pitch and as he was walking back to get onside Boyle patched onto a long ball and calmly slotted the ball past Sarkic to the delight and relief of the fans.

The final whistle blew shortly afterwards and once again the booing rang around the stadium.

American owner Ron Gordon watched the game from the directors box and must have been aware of the feelings toward Heckingbottom.

After the game the Yorkshireman told BBC Scotland: "We'll take a point after being 2-0 down, but the question is why did it get to that?"

"You're looking at the first-half display compared to the second, there was more fight, more drive and more desire.

"I'm frustrated because why should it take a tactical change or a bollocking to get people up and running and get them playing the way they should? It should not take that, but that's where we are.

"People will say we should have more points but you get what you deserve. I'll watch the game back and I know in the first half I'll see some positives but I'll also see players not 100% committed, and the second half proves that.

"I wasn't expecting to use Martin," Heckingbottom added. "But he's trained extremely hard and he's done lots of one-on-one sessions with myself after training.

"And it's in those one-to-ones that I've seen things that's made me think that he's worth 15-20 minutes. His personality, his work-rate and his drive to try and impress me."

Hibernian: Maxwell, Hanlon, Horgan, Doidge, Mallan, Stevenson, James, Middleton (Kamberi 46'), Hallberg (Boyle

79'), Allan,

Porteous. Unused Substitutes: Marciano, Vela, Newell, Jackson, Naismith.

Livingston: Sarkic, Lithgow, Bartley, Pittman, Sibbald (Lamie 57'), Lawless (Jacobs 75'), Odoffin, Crawford, Robinson (Tiffoney 65'),

McMillan, Guthrie. Unused Substitutes: Stewart, Stobbs, Lawson.

Referee: Gavin Duncan.

Attendance: 14,662.