

First-half Boyle double secures opening day win for Hibs

A first-half double from Martin Boyle secured an opening day victory over Kilmarnock at Easter Road this afternoon and sent Hibs to the top of the league.

No spectators were allowed inside the stadium and the stands were bedecked with banners and flags whilst the lower part of the East Stand contained cardboard cut outs of fans including 33 kangaroos courtesy of the Australian Branch of the Hibs' supporters club and a 'royal box' of celebrities including the Murray brothers and Josh Taylor.

Head Coach Jack Ross gave four players their competitive debut, youngster John Doig plus the three new summer signings Alex Gogic, Drey Wright and Kevin Nisbet. Last season's top-scorer Christian Doidge who has not played in any of the pre-season matches due to an injury took his place on the bench.

□ *It feels good to be back. [@MartinBoyle9](#)'s first half double earns us our first three points of the season.*

□□ *Delivered by [@footydotcom](https://t.co/BDQ2c9JHodpic.twitter.com/BRW2J3Kocm)*

– Hibernian FC (@HibernianFC) [August 1, 2020](#)



Hibs opened the scoring in the fourth minute when Nisbet did

well to control the ball on the half-way line before beating a Kilmarnock defender and sliding a superb through ball into the path of Boyle.

On-loan keeper Jake Eastwood rushed from his box to intercept the pass but the lightening fast striker got to the ball first. After rounding the keeper, Boyle wrongfooted a defender before firing a powerful strike low into the corner of the net.

Seven minutes later, Boyle set up Joe Newell on the edge of the area but Eastwood produced a superb save to deny the midfielder's effort.

Gogic went close with a header from Wright's cross as Hibs looked to extend their lead and the second goal arrived in the 33rd minute.

Paul McGinn did well to break up a Kilmarnock attack then found Scott Allan who skipped past an opponent, ran forward and found Boyle at the corner of the penalty box. The Australian international looked up and fired an unstoppable strike into the corner of the net from an acute angle.

Gogic then set up Nisbet but the striker's effort flew wide of the post.

With half-time approaching, the visitors were awarded a free-kick 25-yards from goal and veteran winger Chris Burke lashed the ball into the top corner leaving Ofir Marciano helpless.

Eastwood was replaced at the break by former Aberdeen keeper Danny Rogers and Kilmarnock dominated the early possession.

Daryl Horgan replaced Allan on the hour mark then two minutes later Marciano produced a sensational instinctive save to prevent Hanlon's deflected clearance going into his own net.

McGinn was shown a yellow card for a late challenge on Rory

McKenzie then Ross made a double substitution replacing Doig and Wright with Doidge and Lewis Stevenson.

Newell's superb lobbed pass gave Boyle the chance of a hattrick but his effort flew over the bar.

Power was booked for a late challenge on man of the match Boyle then Doidge headed a Newell cross wide of the post.

Stevenson did well to block a goalbound shot as Kilmarnock pressed forward looking for an equaliser.

Doidge received treatment for a head knock after a clash with Kirk Broadfoot then Hibs were denied a clear cut penalty when Broadfoot clearly handled the ball inside the area but referee John Beaton waved away the Hibs players' appeal.

Beaton's blunder could have proved costly as Danny Whitehall looped a header over the bar in the dying minutes then Marciano did well to hold a McKenzie effort and the Hibs players were able to see the five added minutes out and claim the three points.

After the final whistle Ross told BBC Scotland: "We had to show different qualities in different parts of our game. We carried that attacking threat that I believe we will always do. I would have liked to have had more control of the game but we played a good team. We had to defend resolutely and I was pleased we did that today, it's something we've worked hard on and rectified from last season.

"Ryan Porteous rolled his ankle in the first half, but testament to his character, he wanted to come through the whole game. He's been a huge plus for me, he's a really good young centre-half and he has looked good during pre-season."

Hibs: Marciano, McGinn, Porteous, Hanlon, Doig, Newell, Allan, Gogic, Wright, Boyle and Nisbet. Subs: Dabrowski, McGregor, Gray, Stevenson, Hallberg, Horgan, F Murray, Gullan, Doidge.

Kilmarnock: Eastwood, Broadfoot, Power, McKenzie, Kiltie, Kabamba, Findlay, Waters, Millen, Tshibola, Burke. Subs: Rogers, McGowan, Dicker, Brophy, Whitehall, Ibsen Rossi, El Makrini, Cameron, Brindley.

Referee John Beaton.