

# Hibs' unbeaten start to the season ends with defeat to Aberdeen

**Hibs' unbeaten start to the season ended with a 1-0 defeat to Aberdeen at Easter Road this afternoon.**

There was drama ahead of kick-off when it was announced that an unnamed Hibs' player had tested positive for COVID-19 on Friday but had been given the all-clear this morning. That player was subsequently identified as influential defensive midfielder Alex Gogic (pictured) and despite providing a negative test to the NHS he was instructed to self-isolate for ten days.



Alex Gogic of Hibernian

Hibernian Player warm up for the new season at Hibernian Training centre

PHOTO Alan Rennie

Three of the Aberdeen' eight who were given a three match suspended sentence by the SFA for breaching COVID-19 regulations started the game, namely Matty Kennedy,, Jonny Hayes and Scott McKenna. Robbie McCrorie who joined the 'Dons ahead of Hibs also started the game. Former Hibs' Scottish Cup winning midfielder Dylan McGeouch had to be content with a place on the bench.

Head Coach Jack Ross made two changes to the starting XI that beat St Johnstone last weekend with Melker Hallberg replaced the unfortunate Gogic whilst Drey Wright took over from the

Daryl Horgan who is due to leave the club in the next few days. New signing Jamie Murphy was listed amongst the substitutes.

Hibs started brightly and created a good chance in the opening minute when Joe Lewis dropped a Joe Newell cross under pressure from Christian Doidge. Scott Allan took possession and slid the ball to Martin Boyle but Lewis was able to recover easily saved the Australian international's effort.

Boyle and Wright both sent in dangerous crosses from the right but both evaded Doidge.

In the ninth minute Allan beat two defenders down the left wing but his cross was blocked. Newell took the resultant corner which was cleared into the path of Josh Doig who fired a tremendous swerving 25-yard right foot strike which Lewis did well to tip over the bar.

Wright then found Boyle with a superb cross-field pass but his effort was well-saved by Lewis.

Aberdeen however looked dangerous on the break and it took a fantastic save by Ofir Marciano to deny Ryan Hedges from close range.

A great run by Boyle down the left wing ended with a clever through ball to the overlapping Doig but his shot went wide.

Hallberg then sent a low ball into the box which Allan dummied. Doidge was on hand to collect the pass but his shot flew over the bar.

At the other end Marciano once again displayed the form which saw him included in the Israel international squad with a wonderful diving save to deny Marley Watkins.

In the 38<sup>th</sup> minute Boyle attempted to clear the ball from inside the area but instead inadvertently kicked Watkins and

the referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot. Lewis Ferguson sent Marciano the wrong way with the resulting penalty to give the visitors the lead,

Just before the break McCrorie who had looked impressive headed a Kennedy free-kick just wide of the post and the visitors went into the dressing room with a one-goal advantage.

Just after the restart Kennedy intercepted a Ryan Porteous pass then fired a powerful long range strike which Marciano did well to save.

Murphy replaced Allan in the 53<sup>rd</sup> minute just before Ferguson was shown a yellow card for a bad challenge on Newell. Hallberg took the resultant free-kick which hit the wall and was cleared.

On the hour mark Paul McGinn found Wright with a great through ball but the winger seemed to be caught in two minds and instead of shooting he tried a pass which missed Doidge by some distance.

Two minutes later Stevie Mallan replaced Doig resulting in a change of formation at the back and McGeouch replaced Scott Wright for Aberdeen.

Hibs had a penalty claim denied when Tommie Hoban impeded Doidge following Mallan's corner but Nick Walsh wasn't interested.

Jamie Gullan replaced Hallberg in the 71<sup>st</sup> minute as Jack Ross's men looked for an equaliser.

With eight minutes remaining Marciano did well to save a Curtis Main effort from the edge of the area then moments later did the same with a curling effort from McGeouch.

Hibs continued to press forward but the Aberdeen defence

comfortably dealt with every attack.

In time added on Murphy the ball fell to Murphy on the penalty spot but his shot was blocked by Kennedy and Derek McInnes's men held on for the victory.

Hibs: Marciano ,McGinn, Porteous, Hanlon, Doig, Hallberg Newell, Allan, Wright, Doidge,Boyle. Subs: Dabrowski, Gray, McGregor, Stevenson, Stirling, Hallberg, F Murray, Gullan, Mallan.

Aberdeen: Lewis, Hoban, Considine, McKenna, Hedges, Hayes, Ferguson, Wright, Kennedy, McCrorie, Watkins. Subs: Cerny, Logan, Ojo, Main, McGinn, Taylor, McGeouch, McLennan, Hernandez.

Referee Nick Walsh