

# Hibs end Rangers' defensive record but have to settle for share of points

Hibs ended Rangers' 114-year-old record of consecutive clean sheets but could only take a share of the points after a hard-fought but highly entertaining 90-minutes at Easter Road this afternoon.

Head Coach Jack Ross made one enforced change to the starting XI that beat St Mirren in Paisley last weekend with Drey Wright taking over from Jamie Murphy whose loan deal meant that he could not play against his parent club. New signing Stephen McGinn started on the bench.

Rangers made five changes to the team that won 5-0 against Lincoln Red Imps on Thursday.



PHOTO Alan Rennie

The visitors started brightly and dominated possession from the start. Alfredo Morelos headed a corner wide of the post then moments later Ianis Hagi picked out Ryan Kent but the SPFL player of the month sliced his volley well wide.

A great move down the right wing involving Hagi and James Tavernier ended when Paul McGinn blocked a powerful strike by Scott Arfield.

Wright was booked for a foul on Kent as Rangers continued to press forward but it was Hibs who almost opened the scoring in the 17<sup>th</sup> minute. McGinn floated the ball to Kevin Nisbet and

the striker took a touch before firing a superb half-volley goalwards but former Hearts keeper Jon McLaughlin tipped the ball past the post.

Four minutes later Hibs took the lead when Nisbet flicked on a long diagonal ball from Paul Hanlon into the path of Martin Boyle. The winger cut the ball back into the path of Wright who fired the ball through McLaughlin's legs into the back of the net to end Rangers perfect defensive record.

Ryan Porteous was booked for an off the ball clash with Morelos then Hanlon was also shown a yellow card for an elbow on Hagi.

Nisbet required treatment after Tavernier stamped on his ankle and in the time added on, Rangers equalised when Kent cut in from the right and sent a cross to the back post. Morelos had time to take a touch before firing the ball high into the net.

Hibs started the second-half on the front foot and won an early corner which was taken by Joe Newell and Hanlon's header was well saved by McLaughlin.

Rangers took the lead in the 56<sup>th</sup> minute when Tavernier's pass found Arfield inside the area. The midfielder played a one-two with Hagi before firing the ball into the net off the post.

McGinn was booked for a late challenge on Kent then Marciano produced a great save to deny Kent.

Lewis Stevenson replaced Josh Doig in the 62<sup>nd</sup> minute.

Hibs almost equalised moments later when Newell's cross was met by Porteous but McLaughlin blocked his close range effort and the ball was scrambled clear. The ball fell to Stevenson but his cross was deflected off Connor Goldson into the arms of the keeper.

Marciano did well to save from Hagi as Rangers looked to kill

the game and Filip Helander headed the resultant corner just wide.

Hibs refused to lie down and drew level in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute when Newell collected the ball in midfield following a mistake by Goldson. He found Boyle who sent a great cross to the back post and Christian Doidge outjumped the Rangers' defenders to head the ball home.

Three minutes later Nisbet controlled a pass from McGinn but fired wide from 25-yards.

Jermaine Defoe replaced Hagi and almost gave his side the lead but superb defending by McGinn cleared the danger.

Marciano then produced a fantastic double save to deny Arfield then Boyle was shown a yellow card for a late challenge on Kent.

Rangers produced a sustained spell of pressure in an effort to grab the winner but the Hibs' defenders stood firm.

Melker Hallberg replaced goal-scorer Wright late on and in the dying minute Morelos was booked for protesting the non-awarding of a free-kick then in time added on he fired the ball into the net but the 'goal' was disallowed for a foul on Boyle in the build up and the game ended in a 2-2 draw.

After the final whistle man of the match Boyle told Sky Sports: "It's a good result. We are not going to get carried away with it but it's a good result against a very good team and hopefully we can continue this form.

"We showed two different parts to our game. We showed we can compete then to go behind to a fantastic goal but we showed good character and stuck at it. We defended well and luckily got a goal at the end.

"We knew we would be up against it and had to counter when we

could. It's a tough task. Their full-backs are great and we tried to catch them on the counter because they played really high and I think we done that. For myself I thought I had a quiet game but luckily I got in those positions that I could create for my team-mates."

Hibs: Marciano, McGinn, Porteous, Hanlon, Doig, Gogic, Newell, Nisbet, Wright, Doidge, Boyle. Subs: Barnes, Gray, McGregor, Stevenson, S. McGinn, Hallberg, Shanley, Gullan, Mallan.

Rangers: McLaughlin, Tavernier, Goldson, Helander, Barisic, Kamara, Davis, Arfield, Hagi, Kent, Morelos. Subs: McGregor, Basse, Edmundson, Balogun, Patterson, Barjonas, Jones, Defoe, Itten.

Referee Don Robertson