

# Hibs leapfrog Aberdeen into third place thanks to victory at Rugby Park

A Kevin Nisbet penalty midway through the first-half was enough to secure a well-deserved three points against Kilmarnock at Rugby Park this afternoon which sees Hibs leapfrog Aberdeen into third place in the table.

Head Coach Jack Ross made one change to the starting XI that drew 0-0 with Ross County in Dingwall last weekend with Stevie Mallan replacing Kyle Magennis in midfield.



PHOTO Alan Rennie

Josh Doig returned to the squad in place of Sean Mackie after being forced to self-isolate when Scotland Under-19 manager Billy Stark contacted tested positive for coronavirus when the youngster was on international duty.

Scott Allan remains unavailable due to a medical issue whilst Jamie Murphy and Drey Wright missed the game due to injury.

Former Hearts' player Clevid Dikamona started for Kilmarnock as manager Alex Dyer retained his same starting line-up that beat Livingston last Saturday.

Hibs wore their new all yellow third strip which contains the names of Hibernian Supporters fans who donate to the club.

Before kick-off, both teams help up Show Racism the Red card plackards.

Hibs started brightly and Joe Newell went close with a volley in the second minute which struck the side netting then moments later Nicke Kabamba was fortunate to escape punishment for an elbow into the face of Ryan Porteous.

The Hibs' players had difficulty adapting to the artificial surface with several passes going astray.

In the 26<sup>th</sup> minute Hibs were awarded a penalty after Dikamona was robbed inside the area by Christian Doidge who was clipped as he tried to get the ball under control. Referee Colin Steven pointed to the spot and Kevin Nisbet calmly sent Danny Rogers the wrong way to open the scoring.

Hibs started to play some neat one-touch football and Nisbet displayed some fine vision with a superb cross from the left which just evaded his strike partner Doidge.

In the 32<sup>nd</sup> minute Dikamona had to leave the field on a stretcher after landing awkwardly following a challenge with Doidge and he was replaced by Stuart Findlay.

Kilmarnock almost equalised moments later when a corner fell to Greg Kiltie but his shot was blocked on the line by Nisbet.

Alan Power was booked for a cynical challenge to prevent Boyle breaking clear then just before the break Nisbet almost robbed Killie keeper Rogers who dallied on the ball but the danger was cleared.

Doig replaced Lewis Stevenson at half-time after the veteran left-back rolled his ankle on the artificial turf and the Hibs' defence had to deal with two early Killie free-kicks from dangerous positions.

Porteous did well to cushion a header back to Ofir Marciano as the hosts pressed forward with Chris Burke in particular looking dangerous on the right wing.

Power was fortunate not to see red after a reckless challenge on Mallan which went unpunished then Doidge went close with a header from a Paul McGinn cross.

Mallan then sent a sensational through ball into the path of McGinn but the full-back rucked his shot which flew wide of the post.

Some great skill on the touchline from Doidge set up Mallan who ran 20-yards forward before firing a powerful strike inches wide.

Kabamba once again caught Porteous with a flailing arm but the referee allowed play to restart with a drop-ball.

Hibs continued to hit on the break and Nisbet did well to set up Doidge but the Welshman couldn't get the ball under control and was dispossessed inside the area.

In the 81<sup>st</sup> minute Magennis replaced the goal scorer Nisbet and moments later Joe Newell displayed superb skill on the right before cutting in and curling a shot from the edge of the area which Rogers managed to tip round the post.

Melker Hallberg replaced Mallan with five-minutes remaining then Newell cut through the Kilmarnock defence but his shot was deflected for a corner.

In the last minute Halberg's looping header from Newell's cross just evaded the back post.

In time added on the Hibs defenders had to deal with two free-kicks but held on to secure a valuable three points.

Kilmarnock: Rogers, Rossi, Dikamona, Broadfoot, Waters, Power, Dicker, Tshibola, Kiltie, Burke, Kabamba. Subs: Doyle, Haunstrup, Millen, Brindley, McKenzie, Mulumbu, Pinnock, Ewhitehall, Brophy

Hibs: Marciano, McGinn, Stevenson, Hanlon, Porteous, Gogic,

Newell, Mallan, Boyle, Doidge, Nisbet. Subs Barnes, Gray,  
McGregor, Doig, S. McGinn, Hallberg, Magennis, Gullan, Bradley

Referee Colin Steven