

# Hibs leapfrog Celtic into second place with outstanding 4-0 victory over Hamilton

On-form Hibs leapfrogged Celtic and moved into second place in the table with arguably their best performance of the season against Hamilton Academical at the Fountain of Youth Stadium this afternoon.

Head Coach Jack Ross made one enforced change to the starting XI that beat Motherwell at Fir Park last weekend with Christian Doidge replacing the injured Jamie Murphy. Kyle Magennis returned from injury to take his place on the bench.



Jack Ross.

PHOTO ©2020 Live Edinburgh News

There were a few familiar faces in the Hamilton squad, manager Brian Rice started his playing career at Hibs, as did Ben Stirling and Scott Martin.

Hibs took the field wearing their all yellow third strip, designed by the fundraising group Hibernian Supporters which incorporates the names of all fans who have donated a certain amount.

The visitors started on the front foot and almost took the lead in the 3<sup>rd</sup> minute when Melker Hallberg chested down a long ball from Paul Hanlon but his half-volley from just inside the area flew over the bar.

Six minutes later Hallberg took a corner from the right and when the ball was in the air, Charlie Trafford pushed Ryan

Porteous to the ground and the referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot.

As Kevin Nisbet had missed his last two efforts the responsibility fell to Martin Boyle who confidently sent keeper Ryan Fulton the wrong way to give his side a deserved lead.

Moments later Hanlon sent a terrific through ball into the path of Doidge who attempted to round the keeper but Fulton's outstretched leg cleared the danger.

Joe Newell was next to try his luck from distance but Fulton did well to hold the strike.

Hibs continued to dominate possession and in the 34<sup>th</sup> minute Hanlon headed another Hallberg corner just over the bar.

Two minutes later after some fine interplay down the left, Drey Wright floated a cross into the feet of Nisbet who tried a deft flick but Fulton wasn't fooled and managed to make the save,

Hibs doubled their advantage in the 38<sup>th</sup> minute when Wright floated another superb cross to the back post and Doidge was on hand to head the ball into the net from close range.

There was a slight scare for the Hibs' defence just before the break when Porteous misjudged a back pass which Moyo managed to intercept and lob over the head of Ofir Marciano but Hanlon was on hand to clear the danger.

Hamilton started the second-half brightly and Porteous had to be lively to clear a dangerous low cross from the right but the Hibs' players quickly regained their composure and continued to dominate.

Wright should have made it 3-0 in the 61<sup>st</sup> minute after Nisbet fed Boyle on the right. His low cross was left by Doidge and

Wright fired over the bar from 12-yards.

That only delayed the inevitable and three minutes later Nisbet once again found Boyle on the edge of the area. He was crowded out by the Hamilton defenders and the ball fell perfectly into the path of Paul McGinn who fired a thunderbolt into the top corner of the net to effectively end the game as a contest.

Hibs made it 4-0 in the 67<sup>th</sup> minute when Nisbet once again found Boyle in space on the right wing and this time he was in the perfect position to knock the cross into the net for close range.

Nisbet was replaced by Jamie Gullan then Hallberg and Wright made way for Stevie Mallan and Kyle Magennis.

Moments later Ross replaced Boyle and Newell with Stephen McGinn and Steven Bradley.

Youngster Bradley almost made an instant impact when Doidge cushioned another low cross from Paul McGinn into his path but Fulton managed to tip his goal bound shot onto the bar and the danger was cleared.

Bradley then showed why he is so highly rated with a superb run before finding Magennis whose shot was deflected for a corner.

Former Hearts' player Ross Callachan was given the benefit of the doubt for a late challenge on Stephen McGinn then was shown a yellow card for a similar late challenge on Paul Hanlon.

Despite the flood of substitutions, referee Kevin Clancy added only two minutes on at the end of the 90 and in the last passage of play Fulton produced a fine save to dent Doidge from a Magennis cross.

Hibs now face Alloa Athletic on Tuesday night in the Betfred Cup quarter-finals.

Hamilton Academical: Fulton McCann, Stirling, Easton, S. Martin, Trafford, A. Martin, Moyo, Hodson, C. Smith, Callachan. Subs: Gourlay, Hamilton, Hughes, Stanger, Mimnaugh, Winter, Munro, Thomas, Owolabi

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

Referee Kevin Clancy.