

Hibs reach Betfred Cup semi-final after night of high drama in Alloa

Hibs qualified for the semi-final of the Betfred League Cup after a night of high drama at the Indodrill Stadium tonight coming from a goal down to win the game with two second-half goals.

Head Coach Jack Ross returned to the club where he started his managerial career for the first time in a competitive fixture. He made one enforced change to the starting XI with Jamie Gullan taking over from injured top scorer Kevin Nisbet. Also missing were Jamie Murphy, Alex Gogic and Sean Mackie along with long term absentee Scott Allan.



Betfred League Cup

Former Hibs' defender Scott Taggart also missed the game after picking up an injury at the weekend.

Hibs had a penalty claim in the opening minute when Drey Wright went down after a clumsy challenge inside the area but the referee waved play on.

The visitors dominated the opening spell, spraying the ball around then in the 8th minute Paul Hanlon headed a Melker Hallberg free-kick just wide.

The game evened out after that with the Hibs players sometimes struggling to adapt to the artificial surface.

In the 24th minute a long ball from Ryan Porteous was well

controlled by Gullan on the left. He cut inside and unleashed a powerful strike from outside the area but keeper Neil Parry managed to top the ball over the bar.

Hallberg took the resultant corner which landed at the feet of Martin Boyle who fired the ball across the face of goal and Hanlon knocked the ball over the bar from six-yards out.

Moments later another superb through ball from Porteous found Gullan with only the keeper to beat. The youngster rounded Parry but appeared to be clipped causing him to lose his balance but he stayed on his feet and cut the ball back to Hallberg who floated his effort inches over the bar.

In the 33rd minute however the hosts opened the scoring against the run of play. Stefan Scougall did well down the right wing and sent in a low cross which caused confusion inside the box. Liam Buchanan knocked the ball to Kevin Cawley who shot from close range. Ofir Marciano did well to save his strike but the ball rebounded off Hanlon and into the net.

In the next passage of play Porteous fired wide from the edge of the area then just before the break a frustrated Boyle was booked for a late challenge on Liam Dick.

Five minutes after the restart Ross replaced Hallberg and Wright with Kyle Magennis and Stevie Mallan.

The Hibs players looked panicky in possession and Porteous tried a long range effort which flew high and wide.

Eventually the pressure paid off and Hibs equalised in the 61st minute after Hanlon got his head to a Mallan corner and the ball fell to Christian Doidge. The Welshman's first effort was blocked but he was on hand to fire the rebound high into the net from close range.

The goal eased the pressure and Hibs dominated in search of a second goal with Boyle in particular causing problems down the

right wing.

In the 67th minute he sent over a great cross which Doidge nodded inches wide then he cut in from the right and ran along the byeline before siring a low cross which evaded everyone.

Doidge should have made it 2-1 when a great cross from Paul McGinn struck Magennis and fell into the striker's path but he fired the ball over the bar from close range.

With 15-minutes remaining Doidge went close again, this time from a Lewis Stevenson cross from the left but his header was just off target.

Six minutes later, with extra time looming, Stevenson beat his marker and slid the ball to Mallan who curled a cross to the back post which Doidge headed onto the head of Nicky Jamieson and the ball flew into the net.

Alloa didn't give up and Marciano did well to punch a dangerous cross from the left away then a mistake in the Hibs defence allowed Robert Thomson to break clear but Porteous did well to race back and dispossess the Alloa player inside the box.

In time added on Hanlon slid the ball back to Marciano. Cameron O'Donnell charged the Israeli internationals kick down and the ball struck him before flying agonisingly wide of the post and Hibs held on to secure the victory and another trip to Hampden next month.

The semi-final draw takes place after the St Mirren v Rangers tie tomorrow night.

Alloa Athletic: Parry, Dick, Robertson, Graham, Jamieson, Hetherington, Cawley, Trouten, Connelly, Scougall, Buchanan.
Subs: Willison, Lynch, Thomson, Evans, O'Donnell, Malcolm

Hibs: Marciano, P. McGinn, Hanlon, Porteous, Stevenson,

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