

# Hibs move six-points clear of Aberdeen with victory over Ross County in Dingwall

**Hibs move six-points clear of Aberdeen in the race for third place with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Ross County in Dingwall this afternoon.**

Head Coach Jack Ross made one change to the starting XI that lost to St Johnstone last weekend with Christian Doidge replacing Kevin Nisbet up front whilst Kyle Magennis returned to the squad.



PHOTO Alan Rennie

Staggies' manager John 'Yogi' Hughes started with three former Hibs' players ,Ross Laidlaw, Keith Watson and Jason Naismith whilst former striker Oli Shaw was on the bench.

Hibs had an early chance when Martin Boyle intercepted a back pass and rounded the keeper before cutting the ball back into the path of Chris Cadden but his first time effort flew over the bar.

Alex Gogic was harshly booked for an innocuous challenge in midfield in the 8<sup>th</sup> minute then Josh Doig sent a superb low cross into the danger area bit there was no-one on hand to capitalise.

Paul Hanlon and Doig combined well down the left with a move that culminated with a long ranger effort from the youngster which was a couple of feet too high.

Hibs had the ball in the net in the 25<sup>th</sup> minute when Irvine found Boyle with a through ball but the offside flag was raised.

Joe Newell then found Doidge with his back to goal just inside the area but the Welshman's shot on the turn was too high.

Just before the break, a Boyle cross from the left only just evaded Doidge and Cadden and the first-half ended goalless.

The second-half started in dreadful conditions with driving sleet and wind then within four minutes, the hosts took the lead with their first chance of the day. A looping cross was nodded down by Jordan White into the path of Billy McKay and the striker hammered the ball into the net from close range.

Within a minute, Hibs had equalised when Alex Iacovitti brought down Boyle inside the area and referee John Beaton had no hesitation in pointing to the spot. Boyle took the resultant penalty which he fired straight down the middle to level the score.

Nisbet then replaced Cadden then Boyle was booked for a late challenge.

Ofir Marciano then demonstrated why he is so highly rated with a sensational double save from Watson then White to keep the scoreline level,

Hibs continued to press forward and Boyle went down inside the area again but this time Beaton waved play on.

In the 59<sup>th</sup> minute Boyle broke clear one on one with the keeper but Laidlaw's outstretched leg cleared the danger. The ball fell to Gogic who fired a powerful strike goalwards but Laidlaw once again was able to block the danger. This time the ball fell to Doidge who slid in Paul Hanlon and the Hibs' captain who was off balance managed to find Nisbet at the back post and the striker fired the ball into the net from close

range.

With 15-minutes remaining Lewis Stevenson replaced Doig but County continued to press forward in search of an equaliser.

A free-kick from Leo Hjelde was headed onto the post by White and the danger was cleared.

Hibs were content to hit on the break and Irvine slid in Nisbet but Laidlaw produced another fine save.

Nisbet then tried his luck from 22-yards but the big keeper managed to get his fingertips to the ball and turned it round the post for a corner.

Newell was shown a yellow card for a trip on Harry Paton then Hibs should have wrapped things up when Nisbet broke clear and slid the ball to his strike partner Doidge but Michael Gardyne did well to block.

With two minutes remaining Darren McGregor replaced Doidge to shore up the Hibs' defence and Ross's men held on for a deserved and valuable three points.

Ross County: Laidlaw, Hjelde, McKay, Watson, Iacovitti, Lakin, Spittal, Tillson, Naismith, Donaldson, White. Subs: Draper, Gardyne, Shaw, Viguys, Hylton, Charles-Cook, Kelly, Paton, Hilton.

Hibs: Marciano, P. McGinn, Porteous, Hanlon, Doig, Irvine, Gogic, Newell, Cadden, Doidge, Boyle. Subs: Macey, Gray, McGregor, Stevenson, Hallberg, Allan, Wright, Magennis, Nisbet.

Referee John Beaton