

# Liam Craig goal is enough to secure all three points against his former side

An early goal from Liam Craig was enough to secure all three points for St Johnstone against his former side at McDiarmid Park this afternoon.

Head Coach Jack Ross made four changes to the starting XI that lost to Motherwell last Saturday with Ryan Porteous, Josh Doig, Alex Gogic and Kevin Nisbet all regaining their place in the side with Darren McGregor, Lewis Stevenson, Jamie Murphy and Christian Doidge listed on the bench.



Former Hibs' skipper Liam Craig could return to Easter Road tonight

The Betfred League Cup winners started with three former Hibs' players in their line-up, Callum Booth, Liam Craig and David Wotherspoon.

After a scrappy start from both teams, a through ball from Jackson Irvine found Martin Boyle who went down inside the penalty area sandwiched between two defenders but the referee waved play on.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> minute, a Booth cross from the left was headed was cleared by Doig but the ball fell to Craig on the edge of the box and he curled a superb strike into the bottom corner of the net past the diving Ofir Marciano.

Hibs huffed and puffed but were well marshalled by the Saints players who pressed at every opportunity.

Doig did well down the left and sent in a dangerous cross which Chris McCart sliced over his own crossbar.

Moments later Irvine slid the ball into the path of Joe Newell who elected to shoot when a better option would have been to set up Doig who was free and the midfielder's effort flew just wide of the post.

Porteous was shown a yellow card just before the break for a foul on Wotherspoon.

After a poor first-half, Hibs started the second in positive fashion. Irvine headed a Boyle corner wide the Boyle had a shot blocked in the opening minutes.

Doidge replaced Chris Cadden in the 53<sup>rd</sup> minute then Paul Hanlon went close with a header from a Boyle cross.

Nisbet did well to dispossess a Saints defender but a last ditch tackle from Craig cleared the danger.

In the 65<sup>th</sup> minute Alex Gogic found Nisbet on the edge of the area and the striker cushioned the ball into the path of Doidge but Zander Clark did well to save the Welshman's effort.

Murphy then replaced Irvine and moments later Newell was booked for persistent fouling.

Doig went close with a first time effort as Hibs continued to press forward.

Melker Hallberg replaced Newell with 11-minutes remaining then Doig cut in from the left and fired in a low powerful shot which flew just wide of the post.

In the dying minutes Murphy set up Hanlon but his shot was blocked then in the last action of the day, a Boyle cross landed at the feet of Paul McGinn but his effort was crowded

out and the hosts secured a hard-fought victory.

St Johnstone: Clark, Kerr, Gordon, McCart, Booth, McCann, Craig, Wotherspoon, Melamed, Kane, O'Halloran Substitutes: Parish, Tanser, Conway, May, Brown, Middleton, Ferguson, Gilmour, Denham

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

Referee David Dickinson