

Hibs leave Ibrox empty-handed despite brave performance against the champions

Two clinical finishes from champions Rangers was enough to secure victory over a brave Hibs' side who were unfortunate to leave Ibrox empty handed this afternoon.

Head Coach Jack Ross made one change to the starting XI that beat Queen of the South last weekend with Ofir Marciano replacing Matt Macey in goals. 16-year-old Ethan Laidlaw was selected for the squad for the first-time.



Rangers manager Steven Gerrard made five changes to the side that defeated Cove seven days ago, bringing in Allan McGregor, Borna Barisic, Joe Aribo, Ryan Kent and Alfredo Morelos.

There was a minutes silence ahead of kick off in memory of the Duke of Edinburgh and both sets of players wore black armbands.

After an even opening with neither keeper tested then Christian Doidge was harshly penalised for offside following a through ball Joe Newell then Ryan Kent went close with a long-range effort.

At the other end Jackson Irvine's 22-yard strike was easily saved by Allan McGregor.

Rangers had a goal disallowed in the 18th minute when Alfredo Morelos's wayward strike was prodded into the net by Kemar

Roofe who was clearly offside.

Moments later however Rangers took the lead. A good cross from the left was won by Roofe but Marciano did well to save his header. Rangers quickly regained possession and the ball eventually fell to Joe Aribio on the angle of the six-yard box and he had the time to volley the ball into the net to open the scoring.

Hibs continued to press forward and Kevin Nisbet displayed tremendous skill turning two defenders before sliding the ball into the path of Martin Boyle. Connor Goldson did well to block Boyle's run and the Hibs player fell over whilst attempting to get to the ball. He made no claim for a penalty but referee Don Robertson couldn't wait to produce a yellow card which was a ridiculous decision and clearly payback for a previous game where Boyle went down easily.

Ryan Porteous then found Boyle with a long ball but he was unable to get his cross over from the right.

From then until the break, Hibs piled on the pressure and were unlucky not to equalise. First Nisbet shot wide from 22-yards after a superb through ball from Newell then Boyle did likewise after being set up by Jackson Irvine.

Paul Hanlon then headed a Boyle corner inches wide of the post and just before the break McGregor did well to save a Nisbet effort with Doidge waiting to pounce on any slip.

Porteous showed some great composure under pressure to clear the ball then Nathan Patterson did well to defend a dangerous cross from Boyle.

Paul McGinn then set up Alex Gogic but the midfielder fired well over the bar from just outside the area.

Kent then did well to break into the penalty box but Porteous was on hand to dispossess the winger.

Hibs appeared to be comfortable but Kent doubled Rangers' advantage in the 61st minute. The winger picked up the ball on the right wing and cut inside and fired a superb strike from 22-yards which flew into the bottom right-hand corner of the net.

Borna Barisic was booked for a foul on Boyle then Chris Cadden replaced Doidge.

McGregor did well to save from Boyle as Hibs continued to press forward then Glenn Kamara was then booked for pulling back Newell and McGregor produced an acrobatic save deny Nisbet from the resultant free-kick.

With 20-minutes remaining Porteous had a 'goal' harshly ruled out with a header from a corner but only the referee knows why it was disallowed.

Rangers seemed to be cruising to victory when Hibs' pulled one back eight minutes later when Cadden found McGinn on the right and his cross was headed home by Nisbet.

Kyle Magennis replaced Irvine as Hibs fought for an equaliser but Rangers took advantage of the extra space and were content to hit on the break.

Porteous conceded a foul 25-yards out and Marciano did well to save Ianis Hagi's clever low free-kick which went under the jumping wall.

Melker Hallberg replaced Gogic for the last eight-minutes then Filip Helander was booked for a foul on Boyle but Newell's training ground free-kick was well read and the danger was cleared.

Cadden's low cross almost found Nisbet but Helander did well to clear for a corner.

At the other end Marciano did well to save a deflected Hagi

cross.

Hibs fought to the last and Boyle produced a lung-bursting run but his cross was easily cleared then in tile added on Nisbet headed a Cadden cross over the bar and Rangers held on for a hard-fought victory.

The weekend's results sees Aberdeen close the gap to four points although Hibs have a superior goal difference.

Rangers: McGregor; Patterson, Goldson, Helander, Barisic; Aribio, Davis, Kamara; Roofe, Kent, Morelos. Subs: McLaughlin, Bassey, Simpson, Hagi, Itten, Zungu, Wright, Stewart, Arfield.

Hibs: Marciano, McGinn, Hanlon (c), Porteous, Boyle, Gogic, Irvine, Doig, Newell, Doidge, Nisbet. Substitutes: Macey, Gray, McGregor, Stevenson, Cadden, Wright, Magennis, Hallberg, Laidlaw.

Referee Don Robertson