

Lee Johnson believes VAR will change how players are coached in Scotland

Lee Johnson of Hibs believes that the introduction of video assistant referees will change the game and alter how players are coached in Scotland.



Cinch Premiership – Hibernian v Motherwell

08/10/2022.

A 67th minute goal by Hibs' centre-back, Ryan Porteous, was enough to give the home side all 3 points as Hibernian played host to Motherwell in the cinch Premiership at Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

Hibs were the first British club to play European football. They were the first in Scotland to install pylon floodlights, have advertising on their strips and install undersoil heating.

So it was fitting that Easter Road hosted the first VAR game this side of the border in a game against St Johnstone.

It only took eight minutes for VAR to come into play and a check by Willie Collum back at Clydesdale House ratified referee Kevin Clancy's decision to show Martin Boyle a yellow card for simulation following Alex Mitchell's challenge.

Once again VAR was called into action for St Johnstone's equaliser when Nicky Clark pushed Ryan Porteous in the back using two hands but Collum decided that the force used was not sufficient to deny the goal.

Then with Hibs trailing Boyle was clearly fouled in the penalty box but a VAR check discovered that Jair Tavares was offside in the run up.

Forty-one of the 42 SPFL clubs voted to introduce VAR this season and the initial plan was to bring it in after the World Cup break but the technology was approved more quickly than expected.

Despite the result Johnson said he is "excited" at the prospect of officials getting more help to get decisions correct.

"That's really important, particularly when managers lose their jobs on bad decisions, which has happened in the past,"

the Hibs boss said.

“However, in any one game – particularly the first – you are always nervous about it in the sense of ‘what am I teaching my players... what am I coaching my players?’

“In the box, handballs, how are you going to defend? Are you going to put your hands behind your back? Can you jump with your arm up?

“What if you jump and get a push in the back? Making sure there are no silly little fouls on the way to a goalscoring move.”

“Everything can be retrospectively judged, so I think that is a real factor that is going to change games.

“I hope the flow can be maintained, because that is one of the best things about Scottish football – the intensity, passion, flow.”

“That is where officials must be A-grade to make sure it runs smoothly.”