

Silverware bagged by Hibs in penalty shootout

Inevitably, Sunshine on Leith blared out over the speaker system to celebrate Hibs winning silverware, The Capital Cup and there were other issues to celebrate, a record attendance of 8,066 for a game in the Scottish Women's Premiership.









Photos Ian Jacobs

Reports pre-game suggested that 11,000 tickets had been booked and it was disappointing that the full complement did not show up as the players indulged the fans with an entertaining tussle at the Leith San Siro.

The arrival of a white flare on the pitch after Hearts opened the scoring was an unnecessary and unwanted side issue but, overall, let us hope that those who witnessed the 1-1 draw will come back for more.

That's what the coaches and players would love to see and, of course, there is another installment of the Capital Cup, this time at Tynecastle, in February.

Hibs obviously enjoyed for winning the Capital Cup and a small matter of the Sky Sports Scottish Women's Cup Final at

Tynecastle against former league pace-setters, Rangers, looms on Sunday, December 11.

However, forget the record crowd and the penalty shootout for the silverware, this game was also for much-needed league points.











Photos Ian Jacobs

Hearts are fourth with 19 points from 11 starts and would have opened a seven-point gap over their city rivals with a win. Hibs remain on their coat tails only four points adrift with 15 also from 11 starts and there was no doubt that Hibs

settled into Sunday's game better than the Jambos.

Michaela McAlonie had a shot saved and Eilidh Adams sent her effort just wide before Krystyna Freda was denied and Hibs forays down the left hand side of the pitch caused real problems for the Hearts defence.

The Girls in Maroon had to thank goalkeeper Charlotte Parker-Smith on several occasions during the first session including stopping a free-kick from Siobhan Hunter.

Hibs continued where they left off in the first half, starting the second session strongly, but it was Hearts who struck first on the hour.

Ciara Grant swung an inviting ball over the Hibs defence from the stand side and unmarked defender Emma Brownlie stole in and sent her header into the net giving the Hibs goalkeeper no chance.

The goal came in front of the Hearts fans in the South Stand. How they celebrated and the goal lifted a Tynecastle team which had struggled to find any consistent rhythm during the game.

Grant was a tower of strength for the visitors in the middle of the pitch and she was aided by Cailin Michie, but it was Grant who sent another tempting cross into the Hibs box but substitute Katie Rood sent a looping header onto the roof of the net.

Hibs did not let the loss of the goal disturb their play and they continued to press for an equaliser however, at the other end, Gwen Davies had the ball in the net with less than ten minutes remaining. She started to celebrate when she and the fans noted the raised flag of a linesman.

The clock ticked down and it looked as if Hearts, who lost all three games to Hibs last season, were on course to claim their

first victory over their Capital rivals since December 2020 until substitute Crystal Thomas intervened.

Hearts had failed to properly clear a second corner and Thomas popped up in the box to smash the ball home. That signalled an all-out assault by Hibs in the final minutes as they looked for a game-winner.

Parker-Smith kept her cool to thwart the eager Easter Road assaults taking the game to penalty shots to decide the Capital Cup, sponsored by Baillie Gifford. Both teams, of course, pocked a point as this was a league game.

Hibs kept their nerve despite Parker-Smith getting her hand to two penalties, one deflecting off her outstretched hand, hitting the post and trundling along the goal-line before deviating into the net.

Siobhan Hunter, Hibs' No 4, smashed the ball into the roof of the Hearts net with her right foot on the decisive fifth penalty giving Parker-Smith no chance. As the ball bulged the net she raced across the turf pointing to her club badge and making for the touchline at the main stand side before sliding across the turf on her knees with her arms outstretched.

She was joined by her elated colleagues. The flags waved and drums beat. Cue hugs and high fives involving the players to the sound I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles) then Sunshine on Leith.

Minutes later, Hibs manager Dean Gibson (pictured by **Nigel Duncan** meeting the press) said: "Today it was all about the Capital Cup, as much as being a league game. We could have scored two or three in the first half and could have had two in the second, but we are not clinical enough.

"I knew the girls would keep going despite the loss of the goal. They roll their sleeves up and get on with it."