

Sibbick stunner sets up trip to Hamilton in fifth round

Toby Sibbick picked up the ball deep inside his own half, played a one-two with substitute Stephen Humphrys and strode forward, outpacing Hibs midfielder Josh Campbell before calmly chipping the ball over Scottish international goalkeeper David Marshall to complete a victory over Capital rivals Hibs and move into the last 16 of the Scottish Cup.

It was the English-born defender's first goal for the club and how the 4,000 Hearts fans behind Marshall's goal celebrated as their favourites completed a 3-0 victory, their first Scottish Cup win over Hibs at Easter Road since 2009. The victory sets up a visit to Scottish Championship bottom-markers Hamilton Accies on February 11 or 12 after the Lanarkshire side edged cinch Premiership side Ross County on penalties in the fourth round.

Yet, Sibbick believes that Hearts, who have scored eight goals in their last two matches (five against Aberdeen last Wednesday at Tynecastle), did not hit top gear during the game.

And the Isleworth-born player, who made a superb pass to Michael Smith for the Northern Irishman's goal in Wednesday's emphatic win over Aberdeen, told BBC Sport Scotland: "They (Hibs) might have had better chances, but we took our chances when they came. We had a clean sheet as well and, at the end of the day, that is all that matters."

The 23-year-old (pictured by **Nigel Duncan** in training at The Oriam) said: "Even the other night against Aberdeen, we were not at our best, but the team chemistry is high right now and so is the belief and we just want to keep that run going."

He added: "We know it was going to be a hard game (at Hibs) and form goes out of the window, but to come here and win 3-0 is a great result for us and for the club and we send the fans home happy."

The 6ft 2in player, who has also appeared for AFC Wimbledon and Barnsley, said that Hearts have a very good squad and the quality in the team is exciting.

Robbie Neilson's team are now nine unbeaten but radio pundits claimed that Hibs were the better side, enjoying greater possession, 56 per cent against 44 per cent by Hearts was the official figure.

Lee Johnson's men failed to turn that possession into goals, hitting the post on two occasions, and Hearts' goalkeeper Zander Clark made several telling stops during the 90 plus eight minutes of injury time. His defence also blocked a number of shots at critical times, but Hibs have now lost ten of their last 14 games.

The down side for the jubilant Jambos, who scored three quality goals, was a red card for skipper Lawrence Shankland after a minute of injury time following two yellow cards.

Newcomer James Hill also came off for a concussion check but, on the plus side, Josh Ginnelly opened Hearts' account after

ten minutes, thrashing the ball into the Hibs net for his fifth goal this term.

Shankland netted his 20th of the season in 72 minutes with a volley before Sibbick's late stunner and Hearts, who are third in the cinch Scottish Premiership, march on and are due to play a league match at Livingston on Sunday (13.30).

Manager Neilson was forced to watch the clash from the stands after his red card against St Mirren at Tynecastle recently, but his men delivered his first Easter Road win as a player and manager.

The boss said: "I thought it was an even game, to be honest, and the 3-0 flattered us. We got the goals at the right time."

Hibs, he said, hit the post through Josh Campbell before their great rivals opened their account and Neilson also told BBC Sport Scotland: "You sometimes have to ride your luck but I thought we did enough to win the game."