

Last-gasp Hearts snatch draw in derby

Georgia Hunter nodded home the equaliser in the dying seconds of a disappointing women's derby to grab a valuable point for Hearts and keep them in fourth place in the Scottish Women's Premier League ahead of arch rivals Hibs.

The leveller came from a corner from the left in the 89th minute when it appeared that the home side were destined to defeat against a Hibs outfit which edged overall possession and had 12 shots against Hearts tally of seven.

Hunter, Hearts' captain, was in a cluster of players jousting for the ball at the far post. She made no mistake and the goal set up penalty shots to decide the Capital Cup. The Jambos edged that 6-5.

In truth, Hibs, who won the silverware after a penalty shootout in the first derby, were the better side for much of the contest watched by 7,024 fans, less than the 8,066 who witnessed the 1-1 draw between the sides at Easter Road in late November.

Hibs deservedly took the lead after 22 minutes when Michaela McAlonie smashed the ball home from the edge of the box, punishing a mistake the Hearts rearguard. Goalkeeper Charlotte Parker-Smith had no chance as the ball sped past her into the back of the net.

And the goal was a glimpse of quality in an otherwise scrappy and forgettable opening spell when too many passes went astray and neither goalkeeper had much to do on a chilly afternoon at Tynecastle.

After that, the home side, with Ciara Grant and Cailin Michie grafting in midfield, tried to claw their way back into the

match.

However, Leah Eddie proved influential for Hibs and Katie Lockwood (pictured courtesy of the Scottish Women's Premier League and taken *by Malcolm Mackenzie*), who recently joined the Easter Road side from a Swedish club, was a lively up-front, switching position and using the ball well to tee-up her colleagues, as buoyed-up Hibs went in search of a second.

Ellis Notley came close with a header which Parker-Smith saved to her right following a corner after 64 minutes but another goal failed to materialise and the visitors paid the price.

Hearts' English-born striker Georgia Timms had a glimpse of goal after 79 minutes when she picked up a loose ball and fired goalwards but Hibs' goalkeeper, Benedicte Haaland grabbed the ball under the bar, and then another opportunity arrived in injury time but the 24-year-old blasted the ball over the bar.

So, the outcome sees Hearts remain fourth in the 12-strong league with 31 points from 19 starts (goal difference seven) while Hibs are on 28 from the same number of games (goal difference nine).

Hearts are 15 points adrift of third-placed Rangers, 19 behind Celtic and 22 adrift of Glasgow City, the long-time pace-setters, and Hibs team manager, Dean Gibson, will, no doubt, be aggrieved that his squad did not emerge with full points but he was full of praise for the effort shown by his patched-up squad after suffering a number of injuries to key players.

However, full credit to Hearts for pushing forward until the end of the game, exerting real pressure on the opposition in the final ten minutes, forcing several corners, and it will be their ribbons which will adorn the Capital Cup, sponsored by Baillie Gifford, until the next time they meet.