

Saints sucker punch Hibs at Easter Road

A late St Johnstone goal from Tony Gallagher sent the visitors away with a 2-1 victory over Hibs in Leith.

Results elsewhere mean Hibs can still finish in the top half, but they must rely on Dundee dropping points in their remaining two fixtures.

With Hibs battling for top six and St Johnstone looking to avoid relegation the first half failed to live up to the occasion.

The game wasn't helped by the blustery wind conditions that led to Edinburgh City's game at the nearby Meadowbank stadium being called off after 24 minutes.

Hibs dominated possession early on but failed to turn it into any clear-cut chances, however, they did have a penalty claim within the opening 10 minutes.

Emiliano Marcondes went up to contest a header with Dimitar Mitov, who whilst attempting to punch the ball clear, made contact with the Hibs midfielder's head.

Despite replays showing Mitov had failed to touch the ball, referee Grant Irvine waved away Hibs' appeals, and no penalty was awarded.

A first half with only one shot on target was summed up late on when the strong wind comically sent a Marcondes effort from

outside the box backwards and the sides went in on level terms.

Almost straight after half-time, the second half delivered what the first lacked and St Johnstone opened the scoring.

Adama Sidibeh found himself through on goal after a long ball forward and with all the time in the world, the striker calmly finished past David Marshall to open the scoring after 49 minutes.

Not long after Hibs had equalised, Nathan Moriah-Welsh broke well through the midfield, he played in Myziane Maolida out wide whose effort rebounded perfectly to Chris Cadden and the defender did well to finish through the defending bodies on the line.

The goal spurred Hibs on as they looked to take the lead, minutes after his goal, Cadden could have doubled his tally after a well worked corner routine, but his effort sailed over the bar.

The home side continued to push on, both an ambitious backheel flick from Adam Le-Fondre and a close range effort from Maolida were well kept out by Mitov who was brilliant in goals for St Johnstone throughout.

With 82 minutes on the clock and against the run of play, St Johnstone grabbed the winner with just their second shot of the game, Tony Gallagher, with his back to goal found a way to score past Marshall from a corner kick.

A Saints sucker punch looked to have all but ended any chance Hibs had of finishing in the top half of the table as boos swirled around Easter Road at full-time.

Only a comeback from two goals down by Motherwell at Dens Park keep Hibs top six ambitions alive, who will reflect on the disappointing loss as a missed opportunity to overtake Dundee

heading into their final game of the season against Motherwell.

Nick Montgomery said: "It's a game that we know that we needed to win. It was a game where we expected three points and everybody expected three points, but that's football. It's a cruel game.

We have 72% possession, and we lose to a team that has two shots on target. So that's football at times, but we have to accept that. That's not good enough."

The home support let their feelings known after the full-time whistle, Montgomery said: "I can understand the frustration. I'm frustrated, the players are frustrated. It's a game that we should have won, I feel, but we have to be better in both boxes and that's what really let us down today."

Hibs last game before the split is Motherwell away at Fir Park, which they must win if they are to have any chances of finishing in the top-six, but it is out of their hands as Dundee would need to lose their remaining games against Rangers and Aberdeen.



Hibs chances of a top 6 finish now on a knife edge after going down 2-1 to a St Johnstone side battling to steer clear of the relegation zone.

Credit: Ian Jacobs



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