

Superior Hibs beat struggling Saints

Hibs put on a dominant display at McDiarmid Park, beating relegation contenders St Johnstone 3-1, to grab their first away league win of 2024.

Goals from Emiliano Marcondes, Dylan Vente and club captain Paul Hanlon, in what could be his final season with Hibs, saw the Leith side to three points, leaving the Saints peering over their shoulder at the prospect of the relegation play-off.

With Hibs narrowly missing out on the top six, they approached the first post-split game safe from relegation and with the prospect of five relatively meaningless games.

But for Nick Montgomery, that is far from the case following the board's recent statement saying that the season has been unacceptable, the head coach must prove that he is the man for the job in the remaining fixtures.

He made just one change for the trip to Perth, Adam Le-Fondre replaced the injured Elie Youan up front.

Hibs couldn't have asked for a better start after Martin Boyle was fouled by Saints' skipper Dan Phillips, Marcondes placed the ball down from 35 yards out and unleashed one of the strikes of the season.

The on-loan Bournemouth man whipped the ball from right to left, and despite Dimitar Mitov's best efforts, it sailed into

the top corner in the 6th minute.

Just moments later, Marcondes was involved again, he set up Myziane Maolida, who unleashed a powerful strike, this time Mitov could get a finger to it and tipped it onto the bar.

With 24 minutes on the clock, Nick Montgomery was forced to make a change, after a tussle with Nicky Clark, Will Fish went down with a back injury, and he was replaced by Paul Hanlon, who made his first appearance in over a month.

For all the superlatives used to describe Hanlon throughout his career, super-sub has likely never been one of them, but it was the defender who doubled Hibs' lead.

St Johnstone failed to deal with a long Joe Newell throw in the 44th minute, and with the ball bouncing around the box, it was Hanlon who was quickest to react, he finished well into the bottom right-hand corner to send Hibs into the break with a two-goal advantage.

The away side started the second half strongly too, Marcondes slipped in Martin Boyle down the right who cut it back to Maolida, and he would have scored if not for a superb goal-line clearance by Phillips.

Midway through the second half, with Hibs dominating proceedings, they sealed the game as two substitutes combined.

Josh Campbell looped a header over the St Johnstone defence for Dylan Vente to chase, and the Dutchman emphatically finished past Mitov to put Hibs 3-0 up in the 76th minute.

10 minutes later, the two combined again, this time, Vente returned the favour and set up Campbell who was driving into the penalty box, his effort was well kept out by Mitov, who was outstanding, not for the first time against Hibs this season.

As the game approached the 90th minute St Johnstone grabbed a consolation goal, Luke Robinson set up Mbunga Kimpioka to tap into the net, as he snatched away Hibs' clean sheet.

It meant nothing though, an impressive, confidence-boosting performance from Hibs saw them to their first win at McDiarmid Park since 2022.

It was a much-needed three points from Nick Montgomery's point of view, who will look to build on the result for the remaining games, he said: "I thought the performance was good and the result was what we deserved. That's not always been the case this season."

Mitov, a standout performer for St Johnstone this season, kept out Hibs on numerous occasions, Montgomery said: "If we're honest, we weren't as clinical as we should have been because we could have scored another four goals minimum, but their goalkeeper pulled off some great saves."

Hibs will travel North again for their next game, away to Ross County on Saturday, the Hibeese next home fixture is against Aberdeen on Sunday 12 May.



Scottish Premiership – Hibernian FC v Celtic FC

07/02/2024

Hibs' Head Coach, Nick Montgomery, applauds the home support after his side narrowly go down 2-1 to Celtic in the Scottish Premiership at Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh, UK

Credit: Ian Jacobs