

# Late penalty denies Hibs victory at Rugby Park

**A late penalty at Rugby Park denied Hibs their first league victory of the season this afternoon.**

Hibs head coach David Gray made one change to his starting XI with deadline day signing Nectar Triantis makes his first start after re-joining on loan from English Championship side Sunderland!

Joe Bursik started in goal with a back four of Lewis Miller, Marvin Ekpiteta, Warren O'Hora, and Jordan Obita in-front of him.

Triantis started in the 'number six' role with Joe Newell and Hyeokkyo Kwon in front of him in the middle of midfield.

Martin Boyle started wide right, Rudi Molotnikov wide left, and Mykola Kuharevich lead the line up-front.

Kieron Bowie was listed amongst the substitutes, but Elie Youan and Junior Hoilett don't make the matchday squad as they continue to return from injury, whilst the game arrived too soon for deadline day signing Jack Iredale.

A minute's silence was held ahead of kick off in memory of former Hibs player Sol Bamba and the players wore black armbands.

Corrie Ndaba was fortunate not to see a straight red card for a late challenge on Lewis Miller but the referee decided yellow was sufficient. VAR had a quick look but agreed with the ref.

The hosts should have taken the lead in the 16<sup>th</sup> minute when Danny Armstrong's corner was flicked on at the front post and found Kyle Vassell with an open goal but he made a mess of it and the ball ended up in Bursik's grateful hands.

Armstrong then tried his luck from just outside the area but his effort went wide although it was almost redirected by Bruce Anderson sliding in at the back post.

Hibs first real chance arrived on the half-hour mark when Kieran O'Hara produced a superb save from Kwon's powerful volley.

Hibs then started to create a few chances and won a free-kick on the edge of the area but Boyle tried to fire the ball under the wall and the danger was cleared.

Then just before the break Kuharevich almost scored what would have undoubtedly been a contender for the goal of the season with a sensational half-volley with the outside of his boot from the halfway line, but his audacious effort was tipped over the bar by O'Hara.

Hibs took the lead shortly after the restart when Newell's short corner was returned to him and his angled cross/shot deceived the keeper and ended up in the net to the delight of the large travelling support.

On the hour mark Nicky Cadden has replaced Molotnikov then Ekpiteta went close with a header from Kwon's cross.

Kuharevich was shown a yellow card for an off the ball incident then the big Ukranian required treatment for a shoulder knock.

Hibs almost grabbed a second and it would also have been a contender for goal of the season. Triantis collected the ball in midfield, beat three defenders and rattled the crossbar.

Then at the other end Vassell held off a challenge from Miller but his effort rebounded off the post and was cleared.

Bowie and Chris Cadden replaced Boyle and Kuharevich in the 72<sup>nd</sup> minute.

Nicky Cadden's powerful cross was turned round the post by O'Hara but the resultant corner came to nothing.

Then in the 90<sup>th</sup> minute Kilmarnock were awarded a penalty following a clumsy challenge from Obita on Anderson who tucked the resultant spot-kick away to level the score.

After the final whistle Gray told BBC Sportsound: "We know where we need to improve but there were much more positives today, that's for sure.

"My frustration is that we weren't able to see it out. For 99% of the game, I thought it was a very good performance away from home.

"The break comes at a really good time. We have a lot of new signings who all need time to gel together.

"Some of the players are a little bit low on confidence, this break gives us time to work on those areas where we know we can improve."

Kilmarnock: O'Hara, Wright, Mayo, Findlay, Ndaba, Armstrong, Watson, Polworth, Kennedy, Vassell, Anderson.

Substitutes: McCrorie, Burroughs, Deas, McKenzie, Mackay-Steven, Murray, Cameron, Wales, Bainbridge.

Hibs: Bursik, Miller, Ekpiteta, O'Hara, Obita, Newell, Kwon, Triantis, Molotnikov, Kuharevich, Boyle.

Substitutes: Smith, Levitt, C Cadden, McKirdy, N Cadden, Bowie, Moriah-Welsh, Campbell, Bushiri.