

Teenager Wilson strikes late to save Hearts

Teenager James Wilson scored three minutes from time as Hearts salvaged a point at arch rivals Hibs to keep new head coach, Neil Critchley's, unbeaten run going.

But bottom club Hibs pushed their Capital rivals hard in 90 punishing minutes before 20,000-plus crowd and a national TV audience.

Hibs boss David Gray made four changes to his line-up ahead of the basement battle and the first player was booked in the early minutes, Aussie defensive midfielder, Nectarios Triantis, after bringing down Yan Dhanda.

It was frantic and Martin Boyle was ruled offside after a dangerous move which resulted on the Aussie striker threatening the Hearts goal.

But it was not one-way traffic and a good run from Daniel Oyegoke down the right earned a corner for Hearts. Blair Spittal blazed over, cutting across the ball, from the edge of the box.

Hearts patiently moved the ball around the pitch looking for an opening, but it was Hibs who threatened next, James Penrice mopping up, and he then initiated an attack, but was brought down by Lewis Miller.

A free-kick resulted and Dhanda's ball in caused real panic in Hibs' rearguard then, seconds later, at the other end, Craig

Gordon palmed out a cross from the left from Junior Hoilett.

Dwight Gayle picked up the rebound and forced James Penrice to clear off the line.

The Easter Road side upped the pressure in search of an opener and Hibs continue to press down the left side of the pitch.

However, it was Hearts who threatened next, Lawrence Shankland testing Hibs goalkeeper Josef Bursik from 18 yards with a stinging right-foot shot.

Kenneth Vargas was sent through minutes later by Shankland but his shot was blocked as Hearts probed for the opener.

Dhanda had a chance but was tackled near the Hibs goal but, at the other end, Cammy Devlin, brought down Hoilett at the right-hand edge of the box, a dangerous position.

Hoilett took the resulting free-kick and found Gayle unmarked in the box six yards out. He headed goalwards and Gordon brought off a reaction save with his right hand to prevent the English born striker's header opening the scoring.

Then Boyle tried to challenged Frankie Kent for the ball which ended with a booking for the striker. Kent hobbled away.

Just before the break Miller had a sight of goal inside the box after a cut back from Boyle but shot weakly.

The sides were deadlocked at the break but Gayle had another chance two minutes into the second half. Boyle crossed the right and the striker met it full on, but Gordon was in the right place to gather.

Hibs continued to press, making it difficult for their Capital rivals to find a way out, but they eventually broke down the left through Penrice.

The ball was sent into the box but Malachi Boateng's first

touch was heavy and then Shankland was denied by the Hibs defence.

Gayle, a constant menace, threatened again at the other end but Gordon was quick to race from his line to smother.

Heavy challenges continued and Hearts' midfielder, Cammy Devlin, was booked for a challenge on Boyle as Hibs threatened.

From the free-kick, Gordon palmed the ball onto the bar but substitute Mykola Kukharevych bundled the ball home seconds after coming on as a second-half substitute. The green and white fans were on their feet. Time: 67 minutes.

Hearts desperately tried to respond and Shankland had a great chance minutes later after being fed by a neat move involving substitute Jorge Grant down the left, but the Scotland striker sent his shot from 12 yards wide of the post. Shankland looked to the skies, but it was not an easy chance with his left foot.

Then Kye Rowles, lurking at the back post, headed over the bar from a Penrice free-kick before Barrie McKay was introduced along with teenager James Wilson.

Hibs pressed forward looking to clinch the game and Penrice was booked before Jake Doyle-Hayes, out for 14 months through injury, was introduced with ten minutes left, for Hoilett.

The home side had a great chance to secure the three points when Triantis then clean through only to fire straight at Gordon. That miss proved costly.

This physical battle raged on and Grant was booked but McKay created a chance, threading a ball through for Forrest, but the former Livingston man failed to make it count.

Young defender Adam Forrester was then introduced for Oyegoke with five minutes left and Hearts found a way. From a throw in

from Penrice, Forrest nodded the ball on and 17-year-old Wilson popped up six yards put, keeping his composure to fire home. Time: 87 minutes.

The nerves were jangling and Gordon then saved as 20,011 fans watched on.

Hearts seemed the most likely side to win the clash, and they had a late chance, but Hibs survived. The point moves them on to six but they still prop up the rest. Hearts also have six points but from ten games, one more than Hibs.

Critchley, walked away from Easter Road with his unbeaten record intact, but now comes the challenge of Kilmarnock on Wednesday (19.45) at Tynecastle. Hibs travel to Dingwall to play Ross County (19.45).

PICTURE: James Wilson (right) in training at Riccarton.
Picture *Nigel Duncan*