

How Gray turned Hibs around

Humble pie time. In January's edition of The Edinburgh Reporter I suggested that Hibs fans would happily settle for top-flight football next season and whether David Gray would still be in charge was anyone's guess.

Given that I've been going to Easter Road every other week for nearly 60-years, you would assume that by now I could pretty much predict how things would turn out.

But to be fair, at the time of writing, Gray's men had just beaten Ross County at Easter Road to climb off the bottom of the table.

But the defence was still leaking goals, the midfield were being overrun and our big money signing and star striker had suffered a long-term injury on international duty.

Since then, an incredible run of 15-games unbeaten has seen Gray pick up two Glen's Manager of the Month Awards and Hibs move up to third in the table.

The run includes back-to-back derby wins and a famous victory over champions elect Celtic.

That run came to an end at Celtic Park with a Scottish Cup quarter-final defeat but a top-six finish looks likely and the potentially a lucrative European spot.

So what's changed at Easter Road? Firstly Jordan Smith has

claimed the number one spot from Josef Bursic and despite a nervous start, the goalkeeper has made crucial saves when it matters, earning a new contract.

Gray also changed the defence, playing Rocky Bushiri in the middle of a back three alongside Warren O'Hora and the underrated Jack Iredale.

Nectar Triantis, who joined last season on loan as a central defender now relishes a midfield role but his form is likely to mean that his parent club Sunderland will want him back next term.

Up front Kieron Bowie has returned from a long-term injury although his absence from the team has meant extra minutes for experienced striker Dwight Gayle whose derby winner has made him a huge fans favourite.

But possibly the main factor in Hibs upsurge in form was the signing of Nicky Cadden whose form and attitude earned him a Glen's Player of the Month award in December.

Cadden picked up an injury in the Cup defeat so Jordan Obita is likely to take his place.

The last time Hibs went 13 league games unbeaten in the top-flight was back in 1988 under manager Alex Miller. That started mid-April with a draw against Rangers, and continued until October as Hibs beat Celtic 3-1.

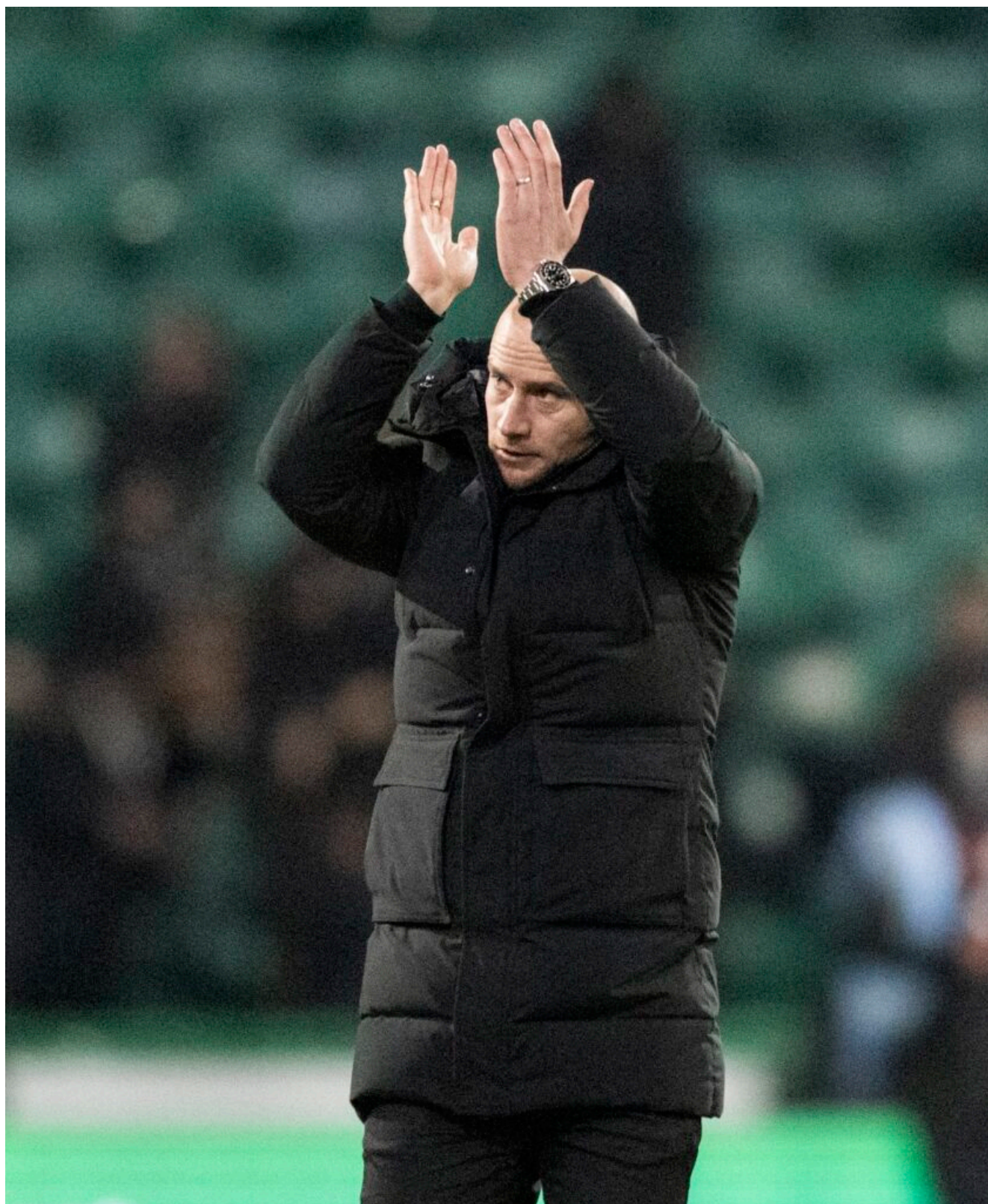
That run saw Hibs win six matches and draw seven, however, it spanned across two seasons – the end of the 1987/88 campaign and the beginning of 1988/89.

The last time Hibs had a top-flight 13-game run in the same season was all the way back in 1949/50!

Managed by Hugh Shaw, the 'Famous Five' were competing at the very top of Scottish football, and that season narrowly missed out on the league title.

The run started with a 2-0 win over Aberdeen and finished with a 1-0 away win at Clyde. During that period, Hibs won 12 of the 13 matches.

So with the split approaching where will Hibs finish up? Your guess is as good as mine.



Scottish Premiership – Hibernian FC v Motherwell FC

11/1/2025

Hibs' Head Coach, David Gray, applauds the fans after Hibs beat Motherwell 3-1 in the Scottish Premiership at Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh, UK.

Credit: Ian Jacobs