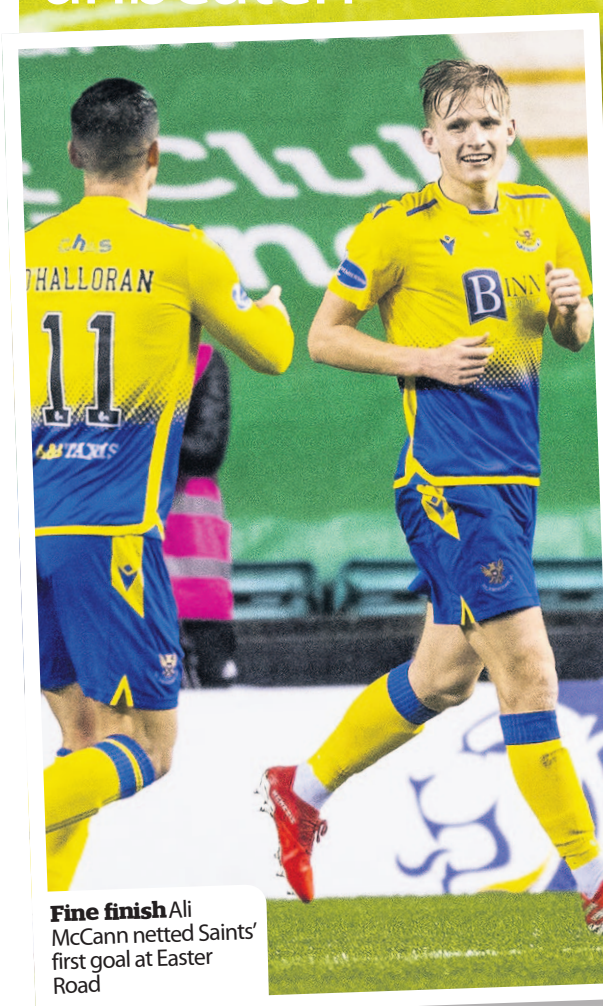
Steady run goes on



Comeback Hibernian's Paul McGinn scores his second to make it 2-2

Saints now nine games unbeaten



Fine finish Ali McCann netted Saints' first goal at Easter Road



Consistency The Perth side continued their good run of form since the start of October

HIBERNIAN 2
ST JOHNSTONE 2
Robbie Chalmers

It was August 2012 the last time Hibernian managed to record a home league win against St Johnstone.

Eoin Doyle and Paul Hanlon led Hibs to a 2-0 win on that occasion - but for the past eight years since then the Perth side have proved to be untouchable when playing on the Easter Road turf.

Hovever, the Saints players could have been forgiven for thinking that run was at risk of ending before kick-off, as they unfortunately had to do without captain Jason Kerr.

The 23-year-old was left out after picking up a back injury during the warm up.

Manager Callum Davidson already had both Murray Davidson and Craig Conway missing after knocks against Motherwell on Saturday.

So Saints saw a number of changes to the starting line-up, with Liam Craig coming in to captain in Kerr's absence, Shaun Rooney replacing Kerr in defence, Michael O'Halloran was in for David Wotherspoon and Guy Melamed made his first league start.

And it was the Israeli striker who had the Perth side's first chance. Liam Craig's corner saw the ball break to Melamed who made room for himself but shot over.

Saints then broke with a three on three but Michael O'Halloran's strike shaved the post as the Perth side made a positive start.

Scott Tanser looked to make way down the left wing for crossing opportunities as the heavens began to open up on the Edinburgh turf.

The ball began to zip around as the Hibs players tried to find their rhythm.

Stevie Mallan crossed in a free kick but the ball was well defended by Rooney, with the Hibees struggling to break Saints down after the early opening exchanges.

Liam Craig's tame attempt was saved by Marciano on the half hour as the Perth players tried to make some meaningful forays forward into the home box.

Both sides looked well matched despite Kerr's absence with Rooney slotting in well.

But the game sparked into life when Ali McCann struck after a loose ball in the box, making it the 900th top flight league goal for the club.

The lead did not last long with Hibs scoring almost immediately from kick-off, slicing Saints open with a quick one-two and a shot which went in off the post from Paul McGinn, with keeper Zander Clark given no chance.

Hibs continued to play a game of keep-ball in the early exchanges of the second half and tried to pry Saints open.

Kevin Nisbet missed a golden opportunity after Jamie Murphy flashed the ball across goal - but he could not connect.

Alex Gogic was swapped for Christian Doidge for Hibs to form a two-pronged attack.

Stevie May then went inches away from making it 2-1 just before the hour but could not stretch enough to convert a good ball from Tanser.

Joe Newell had a close range effort go just past the post as the sides traded chances.

David Wotherspoon had an effort, shortly after coming on for Melamed on the 61st minute, but it went over the bar.

Saints began to expose possible cracks in the Hibs rearguard as Danny McNamara's dangerous ball into the box broke to Ali McCann who sliced his effort.

The next chance of the half came to Hibs winger Murphy whose effort looked to have goal written all over it - but Perth stopper Zander Clark pulled off an important parry.

But in another twist St Johnstone made it 2-1 a few minutes later, when Wotherspoon ran across the face of the Hibs defenders after a quick break started by McCann and slotted superbly past Marciano.

Saints looked like they could sense a third with McCann and Tanser supporting the attackers.

But when a dangerous Hibernian ball in the box was cleared, it fell to Paul McGinn whose volley made it 2-2, and with eight minutes left it was all to play for.

Fresh legs in the form of Chris Kane replaced Stevie May in the 87th minute, who had worked tirelessly up top.

Hibs pushed for a winner but Saints weathered the storm for a well-earned point, extending their unbeaten run (over 90 minute games) to nine matches.

Premiership Table

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Rangers	15	13	2	0	41
Celtic	13	9	3	1	30
Aberdeen	14	8	3	3	27
Hibernian	15	7	5	3	26
Dundee United	15	5	5	5	20
Kilmarnock	14	5	2	7	17
ST JOHNSTONE	15	4	4	7	16
Motherwell	13	4	3	6	15
Ross County	15	3	4	8	13
Livingston	15	3	3	9	12
St Mirren	12	3	2	7	11
Hamilton	14	2	2	10	8

• Line-ups

Hibernian:
Marciano, Paul McGinn, Porteous, Hanlon (McGregor 21), Mackie, Boyle, Mallan, Gogic (Doidge 56), Newell, Murphy, Nisbet (Gullan 83)

Subs not used: Gray, Wright, Hallberg, Stephen McGinn, Doig, Barnes

St Johnstone:
Clark, Rooney, Gordon, McCart, McNamara, Craig, McCann, Tanser, Melamed (Wotherspoon 61), O'Halloran, May (Kane 87)

Subs not used: Parish, Hendry, Booth, Ferguson