

Football – Hearts v Aberdeen



Heart of Midlothian 2 Aberdeen 1

SPFL Saturday 24 August 2013 – Tynecastle Stadium

This was billed as the clash of the two biggest clubs in the land outside of the Old Firm with Hearts continuing their quest to claw back the 15 point deficit imposed on them at the start of the season and Aberdeen looking to get back on track following their defeat from Celtic last week.

With the Edinburgh Fringe Festival drawing to a close, you would be hard-pushed to find a more dramatic and emotional 90 minutes in the capital city than this rip-roaring game played in front of more than 15,000 frenzied spectators at one of Scotland's most atmospheric grounds. Urged on by a noisy and passionate home support, Hearts youngsters yet again demonstrated their hunger, commitment and, at times, skill to secure another three points which may well be crucial at the end of the season when the points are added up and the fight to avoid relegation is concluded. After a splendid opening spell, Hearts went ahead after 17 minutes with a wonderful goal which began in their own half and ended with Jamie Walker waltzing into the Aberdeen penalty area before dispatching a shot low into the right hand corner of the net to put the home side deservedly a goal ahead. Cue the decibel levels from the home support rising to eardrum bursting levels – 'we are the Hearts and we're staying up'. Moments later, great play from Billy King gave Jamie Hamill the opportunity to double Hearts lead but the experienced defender couldn't direct his shot on target and the Dons breathed again. Aberdeen, though, are a decent, experienced side and they dominated the rest of the half. They certainly enjoyed more possession but couldn't find the equaliser by half time.

Hearts began the second half on the offensive and Walker brought out a fine save from Aberdeen keeper Nicky Weaver as the young Jambos sought to add a second goal. The impressive Billy King was proving to be a thorn in the flesh of the visiting defence but his effort on goal lacked the power to trouble Weaver. 12 minutes into the second half the game seemed to turn – and not to the home side's liking. Hearts highly talented Brad McKay suffered a head injury after clattering into an advertising board and while he tried to carry on after treatment it was clear the young defender was concussed. Hearts manager Gary Locke – rather than resort to the John Lambie method of telling a player who had a head knock and didn't know who he was that he was Pele and to get back on the field – replaced McKay with yet another Hearts youngster, Jordan McGhee. McKay had been hugely impressive and I felt his enforced absence would be a blow for Hearts, a feeling intensified minutes later when Aberdeen equalised. Home defender Kevin McHattie was adjudged to have brought down Zola inside the penalty box and Hearts were penalised twice as McGinn not only scored from the resultant penalty kick to level the scores but McHattie was ordered off for denying Zola a goalscoring opportunity.

For a brief spell Hearts young heads seemed to go down and the home support understandably feared the worst. The noise was now emanating from the Roseburn Stand as the Aberdeen fans sensed victory against a depleted Hearts team. However, Jamie Hamill brought inspiration once more by almost scoring following a superb passing movement and this lifted the home side and the supporters. After McGinn headed over from six yards for the visitors, a huge increase in the noise levels rasped around the Wheatfield Stand and rather than settle for a point, this young fighting Hearts team went ahead once more with less than for minutes left to play. A long free kick was delivered towards the Aberdeen penalty box. Dons keeper Weaver came to collect the ball but Hearts substitute Jordan McGhee got his head to it first to nod the ball into the empty net.

2-1 to the ten men and Tynecastle erupted in a cacophony of noise. With an astonishing five minutes of additional time added Aberdeen looked to have secured a point when Magennis had a free header six yards out. This time the effort was on target – but Hearts goalkeeper Jamie MacDonald pulled off a brilliant point blank save to tip the ball over the crossbar. The home support rose as one to acclaim a stupendous save.

Moments later, the final whistle blew and Hearts had secured an incredible win against the odds.

Words can barely express the emotion felt by Hearts players, management and magnificent supporters after an astonishing victory against a good Aberdeen side who may well be pushing Celtic at the top end of the league this season. Hearts are now on minus eight points – and are just nine behind St. Mirren. I felt if Hearts were nine points behind at Christmas they would still have a fighting chance of avoiding the drop. They have reached that stage now and the end of August is still a week away. Yes, this young team will hit a barren spell and the points deficit may increase. But the spirit, hunger, will to win and the feeling that everyone is in this together means this may well turn out to be a season that will go down in history for this great football club.

Every Hearts player played their part – as did the truly magnificent supporters who are saving this club not only off the pitch but on it too.

Top man: Scott Robinson covered every blade of the Tynecastle turf on Saturday – his emotion at the end of the game summed up what every Hearts fan felt.

Hearts: MacDonald; McHattie; Wilson; McGowan; McKay; Hamill; Robinson; Walker; Holt; Paterson; B. King

Aberdeen: Weaver; Shaughnessy; Robertson; Reynolds; Hector;

Flood; Hayes; Pawlett; Jack; Vernon; McGinn

Referee: A. Muir

Att: 15,218

Submitted by [Mike Smith](#)