

Football – Heart of Midlothian 0 Kilmarnock 4



There was precious little Christmas cheer in Gorgie on Boxing Day as Hearts gave a decent impression of a turkey preparing for Christmas with an abject display before a somewhat muted Hearts support at Tynecastle. Kilmarnock have an impressive record in Edinburgh anyway and, led by their experienced striker Kris Boyd, the Ayrshire men cantered to victory against a Hearts team that seems resigned to its fate of playing in the Championship next season.

Hearts manager Gary Locke went with the same team that showed considerable resilience at Celtic Park last Saturday but it was the visitors who, straight from kick-off, took control of the game. After McKenzie and Clohessy came close with early chances, Killie took the lead after just eleven minutes when Johnston's cross found Boyd who timed his header to perfection to open the scoring. Moments later, Boyd should have scored again but his effort was saved well by home keeper Jamie MacDonald.

The Hearts support sat in near silence as Killie continued to dominate although a fine run from Calum Tapping saw his cross land on the roof of the net – the only time Hearts came even close to scoring in the first half. Bizarrely, there was then a five minute delay while the assistant referee running the line at the Wheatfield Stand had to leave the field. Stadium announcer Scott Wilson declared the official was being replaced by the fourth official because of an ankle injury even though he seemed to have little trouble sprinting off the pitch. Five minutes from half-time, the majority of the Hearts support must have been thinking about joining him when Killie went two goals up. The impressive Johnston left Dylan McGowan

for dead and fended off the attention of Brad McKay before curling a superb effort beyond Jamie Mac to put the Rugby Park side two goals ahead at half-time. It was no more than the visitors deserved.

Gary Locke brought on Scott Robinson and Billy King at half time for Adam King and David Smith but if he thought the changes and his half-time team talk might have an effect he was proved wrong just three minutes into the second half. A long ball from McKenzie found Boyd and the former Scotland international took his time before despatching the ball beyond MacDonald to put Killie three goals ahead and end the game as a contest.

In truth, the game was never a contest to begin with. The impressive McKenzie completed the rout a minute from time with brilliant long-range effort to record Kilmarnock's biggest ever victory at Tynecastle. By now, the majority of the 13,684 crowd had long departed for their left-over turkey sandwiches – and, given Hearts performance, no doubt a copious amount of alcohol to numb the pain.

Hearts manager Gary Locke didn't make his excuses after the game:-

"We didn't compete well enough today, and Kilmarnock were two goals up by the time we started", he explained. "There's a lot of players short on confidence, but to play here you have to be brave but there weren't enough players looking for the ball today", he told the club's website.

"It's difficult because you need to try and watch them, and their confidence", he continued. "With them just being young lads, it's a hard bargaining act, but you have to be honest and not make excuses. Today there were too many occasions where no one wanted the ball. I made the subs to try and mix it up a bit, and it worked to a degree."

"We just have to stick together and get our heads down to

focus, because that and hard work is the only way we're going to get any results out there".

Hearts remain entrenched at the bottom of the SPFL. As the saying goes, it ain't over 'til the fat lady sings. Sadly, the fat lady appears to be in full voice in Gorgie Road...

Hearts: MacDonald; Hamill, McKay, Wilson, McHattie; McGowan; A. King, Tapping, Smith, Paterson, Walker.

Kilmarnock: Samson, Tesselaar, Irvine, Boyd, Johnston, Clohessy, McKenzie, Gardyne, Slater, Pascali, Ashcroft.

Referee: John Beaton

Att: 13,684

Top man: Jamie Walker