

# Football – Heart of Midlothian 5 Kilmarnock 0



## SPFL Premiership, Sunday 4 May 2014 – Tynecastle

Hearts continued their recent excellent form by hitting a hapless Kilmarnock team for five at Tynecastle on Sunday. A week ago, the Maroons were celebrating yet another Edinburgh derby after winning 2-1 at Easter Road. The celebrations this time were equally enthusiastic as Gary Locke's men exacted revenge and then some on a Killie team who won 4-0 on their last visit to Gorgie on Boxing Day.

It's a sign of the upsurge in recent Hearts performances that the experienced Jamie Hamill, who was suspended for the Hibs game, could only find a place on the substitutes' bench as Gary Locke opted for an unchanged line-up. Killie, managed by former Hearts favourite Allan Johnston, have a decent record at Tynecastle and they knew a win would lift them above Hibs in the league table.

However, it was Hearts who began the game with fervour with the ever-dangerous Dale Carrick creating the game's first chance before Ryan Stevenson got on the end of a cross from Callum Paterson only to see Killie keeper Samson save well.

Hearts had begun the game with style and their adventure was rewarded after 11 minutes. The impressive Sam Nicholson was fouled on the edge of the Killie penalty box. Ryan Stevenson fired the subsequent free-kick through a ruck of players and into the net to give the home side the lead.

Hearts continued to drive forward with the visiting defence

being pulled apart at times. It was inevitable Hearts would double their lead and they duly did after 23 minutes. Delightful play from Nicholson and Carrick set up Stevenson and his shot from the edge of the penalty box flew past Samson. 2-0 to Hearts.

Killie's Kris Boyd, so often the scourge of Hearts, nearly pulled one back for the visitors but Hearts keeper Jamie MacDonald pulled off a fine save to deny the former Rangers and Scotland striker. Another goal did arrive before half-time but it was for the dominant home side. Billy King set off on a run before delivering a superb cross for Stevenson to poke the ball past Samson to complete his hat-trick. The Hearts players left the field at half-time to a standing ovation as well as a comfortable 3-0 lead.

The second half took on the same pattern as the first with Hearts dominating proceedings. Stevenson came close to adding his and Hearts fourth with a shot that hit the post before the goal-hero became goal-maker ten minutes into the second half with a superb pass to Billy King who raced clear and fire the ball home. 4-0 to Hearts.

Just four minutes later it was 5-0. Stevenson again fired in a cross across the Killie goal where Callum Paterson had raced to steer the ball home. There was still more than half an hour to play and Hearts were already 5-0 up. It was a quite incredible afternoon.

Killie managed to tighten things up for the final half an hour and while Hearts were still dominant, there endeth the scoring.

It was, without question, Hearts best performance of the season. Manager Gary Locke was understandably delighted.

"It was a great result, great performance," said the man who once played for Kilmarnock. "We've been threatening to do that for a few weeks and I'm delighted. You can see the youngsters

have learned from their mistakes. They're getting better with confidence. Everybody wanted the ball and I thought we played some great stuff today. I'm really happy for the fans because that's the type of performance their support deserves."

Ironically, Hearts demolishing of Kilmarnock was a boost to Hibernian who remain above the Ayrshire side in the league table. Despite the doom and gloom at Easter Road, on the evidence of this afternoon, it's Kilmarnock who look most likely to be involved in the end-of-season play-offs – ironically, against Queen of the South who Allan Johnston left last season to head to Rugby Park.

Hearts entertain Partick Thistle on Wednesday evening at Tynecastle. Another performance like this will make the final home game of the season a special occasion.

**Hearts:** MacDonald; Paterson, McGowan, Wilson, McHattie; King, Robinson, Holt, Nicholson; Stevenson, Carrick

**Kilmarnock:** Samson, Tesselaar, Clingan, Boyd, Johnston, Barbour, McKenzie, Makismenko, Slater, Pascali, Muirhead

**Referee:** Calum Murray

**Att:** 13,656

**Top man:** Ryan Stevenson – hat-trick hero and tormentor in chief.