

Young Hearts broken in Paisley



Photo: Mike Smith

Rangers U20s 2 Hearts U20s 2 aet (Rangers win 8-7 on pens)

Scottish Youth Cup Final, Tuesday 13 May 2014 – New St. Mirren Park

Hearts season ended in heartbreak as their Under 20 team lost the final of the Scottish Youth Cup to Rangers at a sun-kissed St. Mirren Park in Paisley on Tuesday evening.

Coach Robbie Neilson – who has now been promoted to first team Head Coach by Hearts new Director of Football, Craig Levein, – was hoping his youngsters would round off the season with silverware but a combination of poor defending and missed chances meant the Youth Cup would not be returning to Gorgie for the first time in 14 years.

Hearts, with several players having extensive first team experience, dominated the first half and deservedly took the lead after half an hour. Great work from Calum Paterson down the right wing saw the utility man's deep cross find the head of Sam Nicholson. The speedy winger's header was saved by Rangers keeper Kelly but Nicholson prodded home the rebound and danced away to celebrate, much to the delight of the large travelling support from Edinburgh. 1-0 to Hearts at half-time.

Hearts began the second half in similar fashion to the way they dominated the first half and spurned a great chance to double their lead moments after the restart. Gary Oliver had an open goal from three yards out but contrived to hit the side netting. It was a missed opportunity which Hearts came to

regret. After 52 minutes Rangers Pascazio's shot from distance was deflected past Hearts keeper Jordan Millar for the equaliser and Hearts young heads were momentarily down. Not for long, though, as Billy King put Hearts ahead again just after the hour mark after a goalmouth scramble.

Despite Rangers pressure Hearts looked like holding on for a famous win. However, with just a couple of minutes left the wee Gers launched another long ball forward. It should have been dealt with by Jordan Millar but the Hearts keeper needlessly came out his goal which enabled Halkett to nod the ball home for the equaliser. There was no further scoring in the subsequent 30 minutes of extra-time which meant the dreaded penalty shoot-out to decide the destination of the trophy.

Both teams matched each other until the penalty shoot-out score reached 7-7. Then, the unfortunate Jordan Millar saw his effort saved by his Rangers counterpart and the trophy was on its short journey to Ibrox.

Rangers: Kelly, Pascazio, Sinnamon, Halkett, Gasparotto, Telfer, Stoney, Murdoch, Gallagher, Dykes, Ramsay.

Hearts: Millar, Smith, Paterson, Gordon, McGhee, Beith, King, Scott, Carrick, Oliver, Nicholson.

Referee: William Wilson

Top man: Sam Nicholson