

Celtic 3 Heart of Midlothian 0

Scottish League Cup 3rd round, Wednesday 24 September 2014 – Celtic Park

SPFL Championship leaders Hearts put the not inconsiderable business of trying to win promotion back to the Premiership to one side on Wednesday as they headed to the east end of Glasgow to face champions Celtic on League Cup business.

Despite their impressive start to the season it was a tall order to expect Robbie Neilson's young guns to turn over the Hoops in their own back yard – despite having done so on the last two occasions these sides have met in this competition. And so it proved as Celtic won through the quarter final but Hearts gave a decent, spirited account of themselves and the game turned on two penalty kicks early in the second half.

The Maroons opened brightly, having dispossessed Celtic straight from kick-off with striker Osman Sow causing the Celtic rear-guard no end of problems. Hearts midfield, with Buaben and Gomis looking particularly impressive, looked comfortable in dealing with any Celtic threat. After 12 minutes, Callum Paterson delivered a fine cross from the right into the Celtic penalty area which was deflected away from the on-rushing Osman Sow.

Hearts Alim Ozturk has often given the impression this season that he wants to casually stroll through some games and his lack of awareness should have led to the opening goal when the defender allowed Guidetti a free kick on goal from eight yards out – but, thankfully for the visitors, the on-loan Manchester City striker blazed his shot wide. Scott Brown then had an effort on goal before the home side took the lead in the 23rd minute. Izaguirre's cross into the Hearts penalty box was

meekly headed into the air by Hearts skipper Danny Wilson. The ball fell to Guidetti who volleyed home to put the hosts a goal ahead.

Adam Eckersley then cleared off the line before Morgaro Gomis almost scored an own goal as Celtic slowly began to turn the screw. That said, Hearts could and indeed should have levelled things on the stroke of half-time when poor defending by the home side allowed Jamie Walker a free shot on goal from 20 yards – however, the youngster elected for height with his effort which crashed off the crossbar. **Half-time Celtic 1 Hearts 0**

Hearts continued to take the game to Celtic in the second half and the game turned on a tale of two penalties in the 53rd and 54th minutes. Firstly, van Dijk fouled Osman Sow inside the penalty box. Penalty kick to Hearts said referee Willie Collum. Sow himself stepped up to take the kick but his effort sailed high and wide into the Glasgow sky amid rumours flights had to be diverted from Glasgow airport to avoid the ball...

Sixty seconds later, Willie Collum awarded another penalty – this time for Celtic. Guidetti was brought down by Ozturk in the box; Commons then showed how a penalty should be taken by driving the ball low and sure into the corner of the net.

After an hour the game was all but over. Stokes delivered a teasing cross which no Celtic player thought was worth going for, Unfortunately, Hearts Adam Eckersley thought he would chest it back to goalkeeper Neil Alexander – only to find the keeper was not where he thought he was and the ball nestled into the net.

There endeth the scoring on what ended up a disappointing night for Hearts, not so much with the result which many people may have expected, but with the manner they conceded the goals. They will learn that they may get away with slack defending in the Championship – but playing the Premiership

champions is a different kettle of fish.

Celtic: Gordon, Ambrose, van Dijk, Denayer, Izaguirre, Brown, Johansen, McGregor Commons, Stokes, Guidetti

Hearts: Alexander, Paterson, Wilson, Ozturk, Gomis, Walker, Nicholson, Buaben, Carrick, Sow, Eckersley.

Referee: Willie Collum

Att: 15,522

Top man: Prince Buaben