

Dumbarton 0 Hearts of Midlothian 0

SPFL Championship, Saturday 13 September 2014 – The Bet Butler Stadium

Hearts 100% winning start to the league season came to an end on Saturday as Dumbarton, managed by former Hibs player Ian Murray, battled for a deserved point in a goalless draw. Given Hearts have beaten Rangers, Hibernian and Falkirk – though to be the main challengers for promotion already this season – failure to do likewise to the Sons of the Rock is something of a disappointment.

Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson made two changes from the side that demolished Falkirk a fortnight ago with goalkeeper Neil Alexander returning from injury and Jason Holt replacing the suspended Prince Buaben in the middle of the park.

It was expected the home side would be keen to show their physical side – not for them the shipping of four goals to the Maroon machine as had happened to Raith Rovers and Falkirk. And so the early challenges came crunching in. Hearts Kevin McHattie was forced off after just 12 minutes due to injury and he was replaced by Hearts recent signing Adam Eckersley.

It was very much a stop-start game but James Keatings ought to have given the visitors the lead in the 22nd minute but his header went over the bar. Then, another former Hibby playing for the Sons, Colin Nish, rose above Danny Wilson and Alim Ozturk to head towards goal but Alexander was alert to the threat. Hearts then wasted a great opportunity to open the scoring when Jason Holt's long-range effort was pushed out by Sons keeper Rogers to the path of Osman Sow – but the big striker drove the rebound straight back to the goalie. **Half-time Dumbarton 0 Hearts 0**

Hearts dominated the second half but the goalscoring machine of recent weeks was clearly malfunctioning. Jordan McGhee headed Billy King's cross over the bar; Sam Nicholson then went on a run past the Dumbarton defence before his effort on goal was saved by Rogers. Then McGhee again tried his luck from 30 yards but his effort was brilliantly saved by Rogers.

After substitute Jamie Walker had an effort well saved by the heroic Dumbarton keeper, Sam Nicholson then thought he had scored the winner in injury time – only for his header to smack off the crossbar.

The game ended in a goalless stalemate, a result which clearly delighted the home support more than the Maroon Army.

Dumbarton: Rogers, van Zanten, Linton, Graham, Taggart, Gilhaney, Agnew, Nish, Megginson, Kirkpatrick, Kane.

Hearts: Alexander, McHattie, Wilson, Ozturk, Gomis, Holt, Nicholson, King, Keatings, Sow, McGhee.

Referee: George Salmond

Att: 1,757

Top man: Sam Nicholson