

Heart of Midlothian 5 Livingston 0

SPFL Championship, Sunday 28 September 2014 – Tynecastle

The last time Hearts played Livingston was on 20 August in the Petrofac Training Cup. Hearts crashed to a 4-1 defeat that night at Almondvale but the team that faced the West Lothian side at Tynecastle on Sunday afternoon on league business was a very different one.

Head Coach Robbie Neilson was looking for a response from his side who were defeated by Celtic in the League Cup in Glasgow on Wednesday evening. And, by 6.00pm on Sunday evening he had certainly got one.

For the second weekend in succession, Hearts scored five goals to delight another huge crowd at Tynecastle. While last Saturday was, to lapse into cliché mode if I may, a game of two halves – Hearts huffed and puffed in the first period before coming good in the second – Sunday afternoon saw Robbie Neilson's men dominate from kick-off.

Hearts Callum Paterson had an early chance when he headed over before Osman Sow delivered a teasing cross which went just wide. Hearts looked in the mood and the quick, neat passing game which has been a welcome feature this season was back.

Inevitably, the marauding Maroons took the lead in the 14th minute. Slack defensive play from the visitors allowed El Hassnaoui to turn neatly in the penalty box before drilling a low shot beyond Livvy keeper Jamieson. A goal not unlike Rudi Skacel's first goal against Hibernian at Hampden in the 2012 Scottish Cup final.

Livvy weren't often seen as an attacking force with only former Jambo Mark Burchill looking anything like a threat.

Hearts El Hassnaoui should have doubled the home side's lead when he drove wide the rebound from Ozturk's free-kick.

After half an hour, Hearts went two goals in front. Jamie Walker danced into the Livvy penalty box before poking the ball between Jamieson and the near post. The keeper really shouldn't have been caught out but Hearts fans weren't complaining. Just before half-time Hearts all but secured three points when shambolic defending from the visitors gifted a third goal. O'Brien was the main culprit and his pass to Sow was gratefully received by the Swedish striker who stroked the ball home. **Half-time Hearts 3 Livingston 0**

Understandably, the tempo of the game dropped in the second half and Burchill really should have given Hearts a wake-up call when he drove into the Hearts penalty area but his effort on goal trundled across the six yard box and Hearts escaped. Burchill was immediately substituted.

Morgaro Gomis then tried his luck for Hearts with a 20 yard shot which crashed off the Livingston crossbar. Hearts replaced El Hassnaoui with James Keatings and the former Hamilton Accies striker immediately caused a now weary Livvy defence all kinds of problems. Keatings produced a superb save from Jamieson before Sow did likewise as Hearts looked to turn the screw. Sow really should have scored Hearts fourth goal of the afternoon but he seemed to dither as he bore down on goal and the chance was lost. However, further goals did arrive.

With three minutes left substitute Dale Carrick pulled the ball back for Keatings and the striker made no mistake by firing the ball home from 12 yards. Three minutes later, a brilliant cross from the right from Callum Paterson was hooked home by Sow and the scoring was complete at 5-0 to Hearts.

Another fine afternoon for Hearts and a good result albeit against a Livingston side who were in a charitable mood. Hearts still need to work on their defence and a sometimes too

casual approach but this Hearts team is very much a work in progress. Robbie Neilson's side are now six points clear at the top of the SPFL Championship although second placed Rangers play Hibernian at Ibrox on Monday evening. A share of the spoils in Govan would make Hearts position in the league look even better...

Hearts: Alexander, Paterson, McHattie, Wilson, Ozturk, Gomis, Walker, El Hassnaoui, Nicholson, Buaben, Sow

Livingston: Jamieson, Sives, Talbot, Fordyce, Kyle Jacobs, Keaghan Jacobs, O'Brien, Hippolyte, White, Glen, Burchill

Referee: Don Robertson

Att: 14,848

Top man: Yet again, it has to be Prince Buaben. He just oozes class.