

Heart of Midlothian 2 Alloa Athletic 0



SPFL Championship, Saturday 20 December 2014 – Tynecastle

It was very much a case of 'as you were' as Hearts recorded a comfortable win in their final home game of 2014 on Saturday. Against an Alloa team who gave them plenty of problems in the corresponding fixture in Clackmannanshire in October, Hearts never looked in any trouble with two first half goals from James Keatings and Callum Paterson all but sealing victory before half-time. It was Hearts ninth home win in succession in the SPFL Championship and maintained the Gorgie club's nine point lead over Rangers at the top of the league.

With Morgaro Gomis still suspended there was a rare start for Scott Robinson for the home side while there was a welcome return, albeit on the substitutes' bench, for Sam Nicholson and Gary Oliver who has returned from his loan spell at Stenhousemuir.

Hearts began the game playing their usual passing style although it was clear Alloa were determined to fight for every ball and not allow themselves to be steamrollered as so many of Hearts opponents have been so far this season. Hearts patience build up was rewarded in the 16th minute when Prince Buaben won the ball before Miguel Pallardo threaded a pass to James Keatings. The former Hamilton Accies striker finished well with a left foot shot to give the home side the lead and break the visitors' resistance.

Buaben almost doubled Hearts lead before the home side did indeed grab a second goal after half an hour. Callum Paterson did well to get on the end of Jamie Walker's short cross to

steer the ball past McDowall in the Accies goal to make it 2-0.

Former Hearts player Stephen Simmons almost pulled a goal back for the Wasps when his effort hit the post five minutes before the break after a rare error of judgement from home keeper Neil Alexander. It was the closest Alloa got to scoring.

Half-time Hearts 2 Alloa Athletic 0

The second half was a quite affair although Billy King ought to have scored Hearts third just minutes after the re-start but his effort on goal from eight yards went wide when it seemed easier to score. Pallardo then almost brought the roof down with a magnificent 20 yard shot which smacked off the crossbar.

There endeth most of the notable action although substitute Jason Holt did have a chance to score Hearts third near the end but spurned the opportunity.

After the game, Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson declared himself happy with the result if not quite the performance.

“I thought we played well in the first half. We changed our style of play today”, he explained to the official Hearts website. “The players were told to sit off the play and try to get Alloa to come out and attack us so we could break on the counter. We gave up possession in their half and I thought it worked quite well.

“We need different ways of winning games, and playing matches, and it worked well enough today but we’ve got more work to do on it. We missed a few chances in the second half, but it’s done now and we’re ready for Cowdenbeath.”

Hearts: Alexander; Paterson, Ozturk, Wilson, Eckersley; Robinson, Pallardo; Walker, Buaben, King; Keatings.

Alloa: McDowall; Doyle, Gordon, Benedictus, Meggatt; McCord,

Simmons, Docherty, Holmes; Buchanan, Spence.

Referee: Crawford Allan

Attendance: 15,224

Top man: Prince Buaben