

Dumbarton 1 Heart of Midlothian 5

SPFL Championship, Saturday 10 January 2015 – The Bet Butler Stadium

The last time Hearts visited the Sons of the Rock in September they were thwarted after a goalless draw which dented their 100 per cent record in the SPFL Championship. Four months later, the still unbeaten league leaders made the Sons pay for their insolence by putting five goals past their beleaguered defence for the second time, having won 5-1 in the corresponding fixture at Tynecastle in October.

It was an afternoon when you wouldn't have put the dog out, with a gale force wind lashing the ground. However, this didn't prevent yet another huge travelling Hearts support making the journey through to the west and they were rewarded for their loyalty with one of Hearts best performances of the season.

Hearts new signing Genero Zeefuik – on loan until the end of the season – had a debut to remember. The big Dutch striker scored twice and rekindled memories of the home debut of Mark De Vries who scored four goals in a 5-1 hammering of Hibernian in 2002.

Having struggled to score goals in recent weeks, Hearts went for a 4-4-2 formation with Zeefuik partnering James Keatings up front. It was Keatings who almost opened the scoring after just four minutes but his header from a Callum Paterson cross went wide.

Hearts went ahead in the 8th minute. Sam Nicholson drove forward as is his wont and he fired in a magnificent effort from 30 yards to give the visitors the lead. New man Zeefuik

tried to emulate the youngster's effort with a strike from 25 yards which Sons keeper Roger did well to deflect. Hearts Adam Eckersley then sent in an inviting cross which just eluded Keatings as Hearts continued to dominate. However, there was a warning when Dumbarton's Turner rattled the crossbar with a header before Hearts keeper Neil Alexander denied Gilhaney and Ozturk cleared an effort off the line. Any thoughts of a Dumbarton revival, however, were dampened in the 26th minute. Zeefuik fed the ball to Jamie Walker who crashed home Hearts second goal to the delight of the Maroon Army.

It should have been 3-0 to the visitors when Sam Nicholson's pinpoint pass picked out Jamie Walker but the youngster delayed his finish and his effort on goal went wide. **Half-time Dumbarton 0 Hearts 2**

Much like the wind battering much of the country, Hearts made a storming start to the second half. James Keatings hit the crossbar from the edge of the penalty area before Callum Paterson had an effort which was inches wide. A third Hearts goal seemed inevitable and it duly arrived in the 52nd minute. Sam Nicholson and Jamie Walker combined before Walker crossed to Zeefuik who scored from close range.

Five minutes later, Hearts scored again. Again, Jamie Walker was the instigator as his cross found Nicholson who also scored from close range for his second goal and Hearts fourth of the afternoon. The huge Hearts support were lapping this up and their wish for a fifth goal was soon granted. Just after the hour mark, yet another cross from Jamie Walker found Zeefuik who grabbed his second goal on his debut.

The home side pulled a goal back just a minute later when Kane's effort beat Neil Alexander to make it 5-1 – always a favourite scoreline with the Hearts support. However, it should have been six just a couple of minutes later. Jamie Walker – who else? – was fouled inside the penalty box and there was only one player getting a chance with the penalty

kick. Genero Zeefuik took the kick to complete his hat-trick – but, in keeping with many of his Hearts teammates this season, he missed with the kick and the score ended at 5-1 to the league leaders.

A fine performance and a great result for Robbie Neilson's men who struggled on their previous visit to this ground in September. Despite horrendous weather conditions, the Maroons dominated from start to finish. Hearts now head to Ibrox on Friday evening for a meeting with their only challengers for automatic promotion. Should Hearts defeat Rangers in their own back yard, the SPFL should send the league flag in a large envelope postmarked EH11...

Dumbarton: Rogers, Linton, van Zanten, Graham, Mair, Turner, Gilhaney, Agnew, Nish, Campbell, Kane

Hearts: Alexander, Paterson, Wilson, Ozturk, Gomis, Walker, Nicholson, Buaben, Keatings, Zeefuik, Eckersley.

Referee: John Beaton

Att: 1,537

Top man: Jamie Walker – on this form, the youngster is one of the most effective players in the country.