

Falkirk 0 Heart of Midlothian 3

SPFL Championship, Saturday 21 March 2015 – The Falkirk Stadium

Hearts march towards the SPFL Championship title continued when Robbie Neilson's side visited what has become their bogey team in recent years – Falkirk. The Bairns have been the only side to defeat the Maroons in the league this season and, despite knowing that victory would take his side to within one more victory of winning the title and thereby securing promotion back to the SPFL Premiership, Neilson was wary of the challenge of Peter Houston's side who themselves are hoping to reach the promotion play-offs. In the end, though, Falkirk became the latest victims of Hearts surge towards the title.

As is his want, Neilson made three changes to the side that despatched Raith Rovers on Tuesday evening with Adam Eckersley, Jamie Walker and Osman Sow coming in for Kevin McHattie, Sam Nicholson and James Keatings.

Hearts should have gone ahead in the tenth minute. Genero Zeefuik was set up by Sow but the big striker's shot at goal was straight at the Falkirk keeper, former Jambo Jamie MacDonald.

Falkirk had some early chances and had a goal chalked off for offside before Neil Alexander saved well from Morgan.

In the 28th minute Hearts went ahead. Great play from Osman Sow saw him hold off a challenge before the Swede cut the ball back to Jamie Walker who fired home from around 12 yards to the delight of the 3,500 travelling Maroon Army.

It was all Hearts now and Sow fired in an effort which

produced a brilliant save from MacDonald. It was thanks to Jamie Mac that there was no further scoring in the first half.

Half-time Falkirk 0 Hearts 1

Hearts took just two minutes of the second half to double their lead. Adam Eckersley raced past the Falkirk defence before passing to Jamie Walker. The youngster quickly found Zeefuik who made up for his miss in the first half and buried the ball past MacDonald to make it 2-0.

The Bairns tried hard to get back into the game and Vaulks headed wide before Eckersley cleared off the line as Hearts tried to absorb home pressure.

Jamie Walker was proving to be a real handful for the home defenders and he fired in another effort which brought yet another fine save from MacDonald.

It was left to Hearts substitute James Keatings to complete the scoring. He latched on to a Callum Paterson pass before curling a fine shot beyond MacDonald to make it 3-0.

Game over and, to all intents and purposes, league title over as the SPFL can begin franking the parcel that contains the Championship League flag before sending it to McLeod Street, Edinburgh.

A Hearts win against Queen of the South at Tynecastle next Saturday will clinch the league and promotion to Scottish football's top flight after a year's absence. Indeed, should Hibernian fail to beat Rangers at Easter Road tomorrow, the SPFL chiefs can send the flag to Gorgie first thing on Monday morning.

Not that this cut much ice with Mr Neilson after the game. "I would like us to win the title in front of our own fans at Tynecastle" said the Hearts boss. "If it happens tomorrow so be it. No matter what, the boys will be in on Sunday preparing

for the Queen of the South game” It’s that kind of approach and thorough preparation that has Hearts where they are today.

Party time beckons for Hearts after what has been a magnificent season. Robbie Neilson’s men will grace the SPFL Premiership next season. Roll on August!

Falkirk: MacDonald, Duffie, McCracken, Vaulks, Taiwo, Sibbald, Kerr, Grant, Leahy, Baird, Morgan

Hearts: Alexander, Paterson, Wilson, Ozturk, Gomis, Walker, King, Pallardo, Sow, Zeefuik, Eckersley.

Referee: Crawford Allan

Top man: Jamie Walker

Att: 7,735