

Hearts Through After Scare

Heart of Midlothian 4 Arbroath 2

Scottish League Cup First Round, Thursday 30 July 2015 – Tynecastle

Hearts began season 2015/16 by breezing into the second round of the Scottish League Cup when they defeated League Two side Arbroath before just over 6,000 fans at a sun-kissed Tynecastle.

However, the evening was far from comfortable for Robbie Neilson's side as the Red Lichties led at half-time and threatened to cause the first cup upset of the season.

Hearts fielded a strong team with Neilson having stated before the game he was looking for a couple of good cup runs this season. The Maroons – although it was the visitors who were wearing maroon tonight with the home side wearing all-white – began strongly but it was Arbroath who had the first effort on goal through Clarke.

Billy King and Sam Nicholson came close to giving the home side the lead before Gary Oliver's effort was chalked off for offside. If the home support were beginning to have thoughts this might be one of those nights, those feelings were enhanced when Arbroath took a shock lead five minutes before half-time. Gold slipped the ball past young home keeper Jack Hamilton and Tynecastle was stunned.

Half-time Hearts 0 Arbroath 1

Hearts set out to repair the damage at the start of the second half but almost found themselves in even bigger trouble. Jordan McGhee and captain Alim Ozturk got themselves into a mess which produced an gilt-edged opportunity for Coult but his effort from twenty yards went wide – much to the relief of

a now increasingly anxious home support. Their worries were soon eased, however, when Hearts scored three goals in four minutes to turn the tie around.

In the 57th minute an Ozturk cross was turned home by McGhee before great play by Sam Nicholson set up Osman Sow to give Hearts the lead. Sixty seconds later, Hearts were awarded a penalty when the always-dangerous Nicholson was brought down in the penalty box and Sow duly converted the spot kick.

It would not be Hearts, though, to allow their supporters to relax. Arbroath almost pulled a goal back when Linn's thirty yard free-kick almost shattered the Hearts crossbar. When the ball fell to Gold in front of an empty goal, the striker could only balloon his effort into the stand.

But the Red Lichties did pull a goal back six minutes from the end through Grehan and a nervous finish beckoned for the home support. However, substitute Jamie Walker sent the Gorgie fans home relatively happy when he scored Hearts fourth goal in stoppage time.

Hearts through, then, to the second round of the League Cup but not after an impressive Arbroath team gave them more than a couple of scares.

Hearts: Hamilton, Paterson, McHattie, Ozturk, McGhee, King, Gomis (Juanma, 65'), McKirdy, Nicholson, Oliver (Walker, 52'), Sow (Rossi, 76').

Arbroath: Fleming, Wilson, London, Little, Hay, Clarke, Linn, Stewart, Coult, Gold, Alvarez (Hester, 82').

Referee: Alan Muir

Att: 6,240

Top man: Sam Nicholson