

Hearts Win Again to Stay Top

Ross County 1 Heart of Midlothian 2

Ladbroke's SPFL Premiership, Saturday 15 August 2015, The Global Energy Stadium

Hearts impressive start to the season continued when they maintained their 100% winning record with a hard-fought 2-1 win over Ross County in Dingwall on Saturday.

Head Coach Robbie Neilson made two changes to the team who defeated Motherwell at Tynecastle on Wednesday with Jamie Walker and Juanma restored to the starting line-up – the Spaniard passing a late fitness test – at the expense of Billy King and Gavin Reilly, the goalscorers from midweek who found themselves on the substitutes bench.

The home side made a strong start and after just four minutes, Gardyne produced a fine save from Neil Alexander in the Hearts goal. Alexander was called upon again as he saved from Boyce and the early indications were that it was going to be a long afternoon for the Maroons in Dingwall. It was an impression that didn't last long.

In the tenth minute Osman Sow set off on a powerful run down the right wing. The big Swede brushed past a couple of challenges before firing in a shot past Fox to give the visitors the lead.

Just four minutes later it was 2-0. Jamie Walker's corner found Callum Paterson and his effort on goal was helped on by captain Alim Ozturk and the huge travelling support were celebrating again.

Hearts were in control now although the dangerous Gardyne produced another save from Alexander. Seven minutes before the break, County did pull a goal back when Rossi fouled Irvine in

the penalty box and Boyce converted the resultant spot-kick.

Half-time Ross County 1 Hearts 2

As you might expect, County upped the pressure somewhat in the second half and Hearts had to defend stoutly although Callum Paterson came close again with a header.

With 20 minutes left, great work from Jamie Walker set up Gavin Reilly but the midweek hero fired his close range effort over the bar much to the consternation of those in white and maroon.

It was a miss Hearts almost rued as Boyce's overhead kick went far too close for comfort.

Juanma had a chance late on for Hearts but his long-range shot went wide.

In the end, Hearts held on for a fourth straight victory in the Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership, their most impressive start to a top flight campaign since George Burley's Rudi Skacel inspired side exactly a decade ago. Neilson has stated that comparisons between the two teams are pointless but the start made to the league campaign by his newly-promoted side is highly impressive and Hearts remain clear at the top of the table.

Thankfully, it seems the side have retained their winning mentality from last season and winning at Dens Park and in Dingwall is no mean feat.

We all know what happened to George Burley when his Hearts side of 2005 raced to the top of the league. Robbie Neilson can relax – Vladimir Romanov has long left the building!

Ross County: Fox, Robertson, Curran, Davies, Irvine, Foster (Reckford, 66'), De Vita (Dingwall, 61'), Boyce, McShane (Quinn, 56'), Gardyne, Fraser.

Hearts: Alexander, Paterson, Ozturk, Rossi, Oshaniwa, Sow (Reilly, 57'), Buaben (McGhee, 53'), Gomis, Nicholson (King, 68'), Walker, Juanma.

Referee: Bobby Madden

Att: 4,806

Top man: Neil Alexander