

Juanma Penalty Seals Hearts Win

Dundee United 0 Heart of Midlothian 1

Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership, Sunday 18 October 2015 – Tannadice

Hearts secured their first league victory since August with a hard-fought victory over Dundee United at Tannadice on Sunday.

Juanma's early penalty was enough to enable Robbie Neilson's side to return to the capital city with all three points and enabled the Jambos to go third in the Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership table.

Neilson made three changes to the team that drew with Kilmarnock a fortnight ago with Jordan McGhee replacing the suspended Callum Paterson and Miguel Pallardo and Danny Swanson replacing Morgaro Gomis and Jamie Walker. Defender Blazej Augustyn captained the side.

In the home ranks was a goalscorer from Hearts famous Scottish Cup winning team of 2012 – Ryan McGowan.

Hearts began the game in determined fashion. After just five minutes, Danny Swanson's corner found Igor Rossi who set up Blazej Augustyn and his effort was blocked inside the penalty box.

Ten minutes later, Hearts went in front. Augustyn's long pass found Sam Nicholson and the youngster's pace took him past Spittal. The United man brought down young Sam in the penalty box. Juanma coolly despatched the resultant penalty kick to give the white-shirted Hearts team a deserved lead.

Soon after, Osman Sow set up Danny Swanson whose fierce effort in goal was straight at United keeper Zwick.

Swanson came close again with a 25 yard free-kick which brought a fine save from the United custodian.

The home side nearly grabbed an equaliser a couple of minutes before half-time when Hearts keeper Neil Alexander fumbled a cross from the left but the former Scotland keeper made a good recovery and the danger was averted.

Half-time Dundee United 0 Hearts 1

Seven minutes into the second half, Hearts nearly doubled their lead. Strong play from Sow saw the Swede cut the ball back for Juanma and while the Spaniard's shot on goal was deflected, it fell for Nicholson whose effort was well saved by Zwick.

With 20 minutes left, Hearts were dealt a double blow when Juwon Oshaniwa and Miguel Pallardo were forced off injured, replaced by Liam Smith and Morgaro Gomis.

United's on-loan striker Billy McKay came close to equalising but Alexander saved well.

Referee Kevin Clancy was flourishing yellow cards aplenty but he finally took out a red card in injury time when United's Spittal fouled Nicholson yet again.

A fine win for Hearts which enabled the Maroons to leapfrog Ross County into third place in the league. Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson was satisfied with the win, if not the display from his side.

"I was happy with the result, but the performance was slightly disappointing," Neilson told the official Hearts website. "Our defenders were excellent, as were the boys who were away with the U21s during the week and played two games.

"They put a lot of balls into the box and we sat a bit deeper because we knew we had more height and power than they did," he continued. "We tried to counter but we were either fouled

or slack in the final third.

“There was a bit of nervousness because we wanted a win badly, but we got there in the end. I think it’s our first league win since August which is a relief.”

Dundee United: Zwick, Dillon, Souttar, McKay, Rankin, McGowan, Durnan, Spittal, Fraser (Connolly, 76’), Kuhl, Bodul (Taggart, 46’).

Hearts: Alexander, McGhee, Augustyn, Rossi, Oshaniwa (L. Smith, 69’), Buaben, Pallardo (Gomis, 69’), Swanson (Walker, 53’), Nicholson, Juanma, Sow.

Referee: Kevin Clancy

Att: 7,461

Top Man: Blazej Augustyn