

Hearts Hand out Early Christmas Gift to Aberdeen



Aberdeen 1 Heart of Midlothian 0

Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership, Saturday 12 December 2015 – Pittodrie

Hearts slipped seven points behind Aberdeen in the chase for second place in the Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership after losing to a late penalty at Pittodrie on Saturday.

After a fairly tepid performance, Robbie Neilson's side looked to have escaped from the Granite City with a goalless draw and a scarcely deserved point. That was until three minutes from time when young defender Jordan McGhee inexplicably decided to push away a cross into the penalty box with his hand giving referee Craig Thomson no choice but to award a penalty kick. Rooney duly converted the spot kick leaving a distraught McGhee to reflect on his mistake.

Hearts made two changes to the team that drew 2-2 at Motherwell a fortnight ago with McGhee replacing Juwon Oshaniwa and Prince Buaben taking the place of Danny Swanson.

Hearts began the game well enough and with only two minutes gone Osman Sow fired in a cross which was headed narrowly over by Sam Nicholson.

If the 2,000 strong travelling Maroon Army thought they could look forward to a decent display from their side thereafter they were sadly mistaken. As far as the visitors were concerned, that was about it for the first half as Aberdeen took control. The other incidents I noted from that opening forty-five minutes were the substitution of Miguel Pallardo

shortly after he got booked, with Robbie Neilson clearly not believing the midfielder was not going to receive another yellow card imminently – Morgaro Gomis replaced him – and the constant fly-past of numerous seagulls eyeing up patrons of the Pittodrie pie. Aberdeen huffed and puffed and one wondered what the watching television audience were making of proceedings.

Half-time Aberdeen 0 Hearts 0

Thankfully, the second half wasn't as bad as the first turgid period and Hearts thought they had opened the scoring five minutes after half-time when Sam Nicholson unleashed a fine effort from 25 yards which smacked off the crossbar with home keeper Ward beaten.

Hearts almost rued that moments later when Rooney was left completely unmarked in the penalty box but the Dons forward headed the ball over the bar to the chagrin of the home support.

Twenty minutes into the second half, Hearts should have gone in front. Morgaro Gomis found Juanma in the Aberdeen penalty box. The Spaniard turned the Dons defender but his rather weak effort on goal was saved by Ward. Some of the Hearts support in the rather dilapidated South Stand – many could only hazard a guess at what was going on down the left hand side the field when Hearts went forward, given the restricted view – thought Juanma had scored but their celebrations were sadly premature.

From the corner that followed, Callum Paterson headed for goal but his effort was cleared off the line by Flood.

The game seemed to be petering out for a goalless affair until young McGhee's late error which handed the home side all three points.

It was an unfortunate end but, if truth be told, Aberdeen deserved their victory. Hearts looked lethargic and lacking in

ideas and the regular lump up the park to Juanma was all-too predictable and easily dealt with by the home defence.

A miserable afternoon, then, with many of the Maroon Army no doubt wishing they had gone Christmas shopping instead of watching their favourites hand out presents of their own to their grateful opponents.

However, it must be said Jordan McGhee is a fine young defender who has served Hearts well and will continue to do so. The 19 year old knows better than anyone he made a mistake but he will learn from this and he remains a vital part of the Hearts squad – something many of those who have criticised the teenager on social media websites may wish to consider. Everyone makes mistakes in any walk of life – it's how one deals with them that matters.

Aberdeen: Ward, Logan, Shinnie, Considine, Taylor, Reynolds (Jack, 46'), McLean, Flood, Rooney, Hayes, Pawlett (Goodwillie, 72').

Hearts: Alexander, Paterson, Augustyn, Rossi, McGhee, Pallardo (Gomis, 30'), Djoum, Buaben, Nicholson (King, 84'), Juanma, Sow.

Referee: Craig Thomson

Att: 13,110

Top people: The huge Hearts support who backed their team from start to finish.