

# Hearts Held By Kilmarnock

**Kilmarnock 2 Heart of Midlothian 2**

**Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership, Saturday 2 January 2016 – Rugby Park**

Hearts began 2016 with a result that had all the hallmarks of the second half of 2015 when they had to settle for a 2-2 with Kilmarnock at Rugby Park.

Head Coach Robbie Neilson made four changes to the team that defeated Dundee United on Wednesday evening. Callum Paterson and Blazej Augustyn returned to the back four at the expense of Jordan McGhee and Alim Ozturk – Augustyn was made captain for the afternoon – while Arnaud Djoum replaced Morgaro Gomis and Juanma, free from suspension, replaced Osman Sow, the Swedish striker being a surprise omission from Hearts starting line-up. Rumours persist that Sow will be leaving Tynecastle during the January transfer window and the sight of him on the substitute's bench in Ayrshire did nothing to prevent fuelling such speculation.

There was little of note in the opening 20 minutes with an effort from Killie's Magennis being blocked by Hearts keeper Neil Alexander. It took 35 minutes for the Maroons to produce any real threat on the Killie goal and this was when Juanma exchanged passes with Arnaud Djoum but the Spanish striker was thwarted by former Tynecastle full back Kevin McHattie.

Two minutes before half-time, the home side went ahead when slack defensive play from Juwon Oshaniwa allowed another former Jambo, Balatoni, to fire past Alexander after his initial effort had been blocked.

However, Hearts equalised in first half injury time. Sam Nicholson raced down the left and crossed for Billy King. The youngster's shot on goal hit the post but Gavin Reilly pounced

to fire home the rebound to draw parity at the interval.

### **Half-time Kilmarnock 1 Hearts 1**

After a quietish start to the second half, Hearts took the lead in the 55<sup>th</sup> minute. Prince Buaben, encouraged by his goal against Dundee United in midweek, produced a brilliant save from another former Hearts player, keeper Jamie MacDonald. However, the ball fell to Callum Paterson on the edge of the penalty box and the young defender volleyed home a superb goal to put Robbie Neilson's men ahead.

Sam Nicholson was causing the Killie rear-guard all manner of problems and he set off on a lung-bursting run before firing his effort on goal wide of the target. Shortly after, Nicholson's corner was met by Igor Rossi but the defender's header bounced off the crossbar and the chance was gone.

Hearts had cause to rue that missed opportunity when Killie equalised with ten minutes to go. Magennis headed home Smith's corner and the teams were level again.

The game ended with honours even and there is little doubt Hearts will feel aggrieved they didn't head back to the capital with all three points.

**Kilmarnock:** MacDonald, Smith, Obadeyi (McKenzie, 31'), Ashcroft, Slater (Boyd, 73'), McHattie, Kiltie, Syme, Balatoni, Magennis, Frizzell.

**Hearts:** Alexander, Paterson, Augstyn, Rossi, Oshaniwa, Buaben, Djoum, King (Sow, 55'), Nicholson, Reilly (Zanatta, 74'), Juanma.

**Referee:** Alan Muir

**Att:** 5,388

**Top man:** Callum Paterson

