

Young Brigade Inspire Hearts To Victory



Heart of Midlothian 2 Inverness Caledonian Thistle 0

Ladbrokes SPFL Premiership, Tuesday 1 March 2016 – Tynecastle

Hearts recorded a rare but valuable win over Inverness Caledonian Thistle in the Ladbrokes Premiership at a Baltic Tynecastle on Tuesday evening. Without a win against the Highlanders in ten attempts, a goal in each half from Jamie Walker and Abiola Dauda clinched three points and moved the Maroons to within six points of second-placed Aberdeen.

Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson opted for just one change to the team that defeated Kilmarnock at Tynecastle on Saturday and this was an enforced one with Liam Smith replacing the injured Callum Paterson. It is feared the Scotland under 21 defender may be out of action for up to a month with a shoulder injury.

There was a somewhat muted atmosphere on a cold Tuesday evening in Gorgie and this seemed to effect the home side in the early stages. The visitors had the first real chance of the evening when Roberts was given time and space to head for goal but his effort was easily collected by home keeper Neil Alexander.

With nearly 20 minutes gone, Alim Ozturk launched a long ball forward which was collected by Sam Nicholson who fed Prince Buaben but his cross came to nothing.

Hearts were at last beginning to dominate the game and Liam Smith was catching the eye in the full back position vacated by Paterson. The youngster nearly had a dream debut when, on

the half hour mark, he played a neat one-two with Gavin Reilly before firing in a shot from fully 20 yards which was just over the bar.

Four minutes later, Hearts went in front. A long ball forward from Arnaud Djoum found Jamie Walker whose pace took him past the visiting defence and around keeper Fon-Williams before the winger slotted the ball home. The Maroons were deservedly in front and almost doubled their lead when great play from the impressive Reilly set up Igor Rossi but the defender's effort on goal was wide.

Half-time Heart 1 Inverness Caledonian Thistle 0

Hearts began the second half the way they ended the first. Abiola Dauda had an early effort blocked by Fon-Williams but the on-loan striker wasn't to be denied. Just seven minutes after the re-start, Tansey's passback to his goalkeeper was short and Dauda seized the chance to run in, take the ball round the helpless keeper and fire home to double the home side's lead.

Liam Smith then sent in a fine cross which was only just missed by Walker as Hearts looked to seal the game.

They should have done precisely that with 20 minutes left when Sam Nicholson found Dauda who seemed certain to score – but this effort was weak and easily saved by a relieved Fon-Williams.

Caley Thistle had the ball in the net in injury time but this was ruled out for offside.

A fine win in the end for a Hearts team that played some decent stuff in patches. With six Scots in the team, the young brigade of Souttar, Smith and Reilly were impressive and Robbie Neilson will find it difficult to leave any of them out when others return.

Hearts: Alexander, L. Smith, Ozturk, Souttar, Rossi (McGhee, 80'), Nicholson, Buaben, Djoum, Walker (Zanatta, 66'), Reilly, Dauda (Cowie, 78').

Inverness CT: Fon-Williams, Tremarco, Warren, Roberts (R. Williams, 70'), Devine, Tansey, Horner (Hughes, 82'), D.Williams, Polworth, Vigurs, Storey.

Referee: Alan Muir

Att: 15,767

Top Man: A tough call as Liam Smith and Gavin Reilly were both hugely impressive, But the nod goes to Reilly who must have covered every blade of the Tynecastle turf and never gave the visiting defence any peace.