

Hearts Triumph in Tallinn

FC Infonet 2 Heart of Midlothian 4 (aggregate 3-6)

Europa League First Qualifying Round, Second Leg – Wednesday 6 July 2016 Le Coq Arena

Last Thursday night, after Hearts struggled to defeat FC Infonet 2-1 in their Europa League First Qualifying Round, First Leg tie at Tynecastle, I wrote that Hearts can perform so much better – and would need to in next Wednesday's return leg in Tallinn if they were to progress in the competition beyond the Edinburgh Trades Fortnight.

Nearly fifty years of being a Hearts supporter has taught me to be ultra-cautious but, in the end, I need not have worried as Hearts duly completed the job by running out convincing winners in the Estonian capital earlier today.

Robbie Neilson's side were three goals ahead at half-time thanks to goals from Callum Paterson and Igor Rossi within the opening ten minutes and captain Alim Ozturk's strike right on half-time. The skipper was to find the net again in the second half – unfortunately at the wrong end of the ground as his own goal gave the home side brief hope of saving the tie on the night – but another goal from Rossi restored Hearts three goal advantage before Voskoboinikov pulled another goal back.

Neilson made three changes to last week's team with Liam Smith, Perry Kitchen and Igor Rossi coming into the side with John Souttar, Sam Nicholson and Juanma dropping on to the substitute's bench.

There were just two minutes played when Hearts took the lead when Callum Paterson headed home to calm any nerves among the travelling Maroon Army.

In the 9th minute, any lingering nerves disappeared when Igor

Rossi headed home from a Jamie Walker free-kick to make it 2-0 – and Hearts were heading to the next round.

Walker was again the architect when Hearts made it 3-0 on the stroke of half-time thanks to Alim Ozturk.

Half-time FC Infonet 0 Hearts 3

The hosts pulled a goal back five minutes into the second half when the unfortunate Ozturk turned the ball past his keeper Jack Hamilton. However, Hearts immediately restored their three goal advantage when Rossi bagged his second goal of the night with a strike from just inside the penalty box.

Although Voskoboinikov pulled another goal back, Hearts saw out the game comfortably enough to progress to the second qualifying round on a 6-3 aggregate.

Hearts will face Maltese side Birkirkara next week.

Infonet: Igonen, Kalimullin, Avilov (Domov, 46'), Appiah, Volodin (Kulinits, 74'), Voskoboinikov, Harin, Mosnikov (Draman, 46'), Kruglov, Dmitrijev, Masitsev.

Hearts: Hamilton, Smith, Ozturk, Rossi, Rherras, Kitchen, Buaben (Souttar, 73'), Djoum (Juanma, 88'), Paterson, Walker (Nicholson, 69'), Sammon.

Referee: Petr Ardeleanu