

# Watt a Winner for Hearts at Firhill

**Partick Thistle 1 Heart of Midlothian 2**

**Ladbrokes Premiership – Saturday 27 August 2016, Firhill**

Having broken their Ladbrokes Premiership 'duck' for this season with last week's demolition of Inverness Caledonian Thistle at Tynecastle, Hearts made it two wins in succession by defeating another Thistle – Partick – thanks to a late winner from Tony Watt at Firhill on Saturday.

It's not often The Edinburgh Reporter can report that Robbie Neilson made no changes to his team but that's what the Hearts Head Coach did in Glasgow – the only change being on the substitute's bench where Jamie Walker, now free from suspension, took the place of Krystian Nowak.

Buoyed by their impressive performance seven days ago, Hearts began brightly and almost opened the scoring after just seven minutes when Tony Watt, keen to open his goalscoring account for the Jambos, had a couple of efforts which were blocked.

Azeez then had a chance for the Jags when he burst past Callum Paterson but his shot was too high to trouble Hearts keeper Jack Hamilton.

Hearts then went back on the offensive and Conor Sammon forced his way into the Thistle penalty box but his effort on goal was easy enough for Thistle keeper Cerny.

Jack Hamilton then came to Hearts rescue when he saved well from Doolan before John Souttar blocked another effort.

It had been a lively opening so it was no surprise when a goal arrived after 16 minutes. A corner from Sam Nicholson found the head of Callum Paterson and the Scotland defender headed

strongly past Cerny to open the scoring to the delight of the 1,700 strong travelling Maroon Army.

Moments later, it was almost an 'action replay' (ask your parents, young 'uns) when Nicholson swung in another corner from the left, Paterson met it head on but this time his effort was saved by Cerny.

At the other end, Jack Hamilton saved well from Erskine and Doolan before fine play from Perry Kitchen found last week's Hearts hero Don Cowie whose effort from 25 yards went over the bar.

### **Half-time Partick Thistle 0 Hearts 1**

If Callum Paterson is to depart Tynecastle, as has been widely suggested in the media, he seemed keen to leave on a high. Early in the second half, he set off on a mazy run which had the Thistle defenders trailing in his wake before firing in a low shot which brought out a good save from Cerny.

It was a chance which Hearts were left to rue as Thistle drew parity soon after. Ten minutes into the second half, Lindsay saw his header smack off the crossbar but he was quickest to react to the rebound to prod the ball home for the equaliser.

Robbie Neilson reacted to this setback by making a double substitution – Nicholson and Sammon making way for Jamie Walker and Bjorn Johnsen. Minutes later, the ever-dangerous Callum Paterson fired another low cross into the Thistle penalty area which was dummied by Arnaud Djoum to allow Johnsen to fire an effort on goal which was blocked.

Fine play from Cowie then set up Jamie Walker whose shot was brilliantly saved by Cerny who then also saved well from Djoum.

Johnsen then had a chance in the 72<sup>nd</sup> minute but, after creating space, his effort on goal was more of a danger to

those in the stand.

Then Don Cowie sent over a cross which was met by John Souttar of all people. After chesting the ball down, the former Dundee United player's effort on goal was blocked by the Thistle defence.

Despite Hearts pressure and having created numerous chances, it looked like it would be two points dropped as the game headed for stoppage time. Enter Tony Watt. The former Celtic player collected the ball on the right and fired in a shot high into the net for a dramatic winner for Hearts and spark scenes of celebration among the Maroon Army.

Robbie Neilson was understandably a happy man after the game. He praised his players for their never-say-die attitude and picked out Tony Watt for particular praise.

"You saw the quality of Tony Watt at the end" Neilson told BBC Scotland. "That's the reason we kept him on.

"I wanted to give Tony that opportunity because I knew he would create something. His finish was top drawer."

Another fine win for Hearts who go into the international break in fine fettle. And it's worth noting that, having collected more bookings than Ken Dodd in a summer season in Blackpool in the first couple of weeks of the season, there were no cautions for Hearts at Firhill – and the referee was Willie Collum....

**Partick Thistle:** Cerny, Booth, Lindsay, Osman, Doolan (Pogba, 76'), Erskine, Lawless, Devine, Azeez (Amoo, 68'), Edwards, Gordon.

**Hearts:** Hamilton, Paterson, Souttar, Rossi, Rherras, Djoum, Kitchen, Cowie, Nicholson (Walker, 57'), Sammon (Johnsen, 57'), Watt (L. Smith, 90').

**Referee:** Willie Collum

**Att:** 4,919

**Top man:** Callum Paterson