

Callum Paterson Impresses on World Cup Debut

In recent years, Scotland's Under 21 side has had a plethora of Hearts players as its spine. Indeed, three of the back four of the young Scots team which lost to Macedonia at Tynecastle on Friday are young Jambos – Liam Smith, John Souttar and Jordan McGhee, who is presently on loan at English Premiership side Middlesbrough. Hearts forwards Sam Nicholson and Billy King – who is also on loan at Inverness Caledonian Thistle – came on as substitutes.

One regular of the Under 21 side, however, did not feature at Tynecastle on Friday. For full back Callum Paterson was in Malta where he made his World Cup debut for the senior Scotland side in the 5-1 demolition of Malta on Sunday evening.

The 21-year-old made an assured debut in the Ta' Qali Stadium with his attacking prowess down the right causing the Maltese all kinds of problems. Paterson delivered a brilliant cross midway through the first half to the head of hat-trick hero Robert Snodgrass but, on this occasion, the former Livingston player headed straight at the Maltese keeper.

Some may have looked at Paterson when Malta scored their only goal of the game when Alfred Effiong got in between the Hearts man and Russell Martin but the responsibility for the equalising goal must surely lie with Martin and his fellow centre half Grant Hanley. Neither player looked comfortable in that first half although a lack of match practice – neither are playing regularly for their respective clubs – probably contributed to this.

After a bright opening to the game on Sunday evening, Scotland struggled when Malta equalised although it was a convincing

win for the Scots in the end. That said, it's worth noting that Scotland scored four of their goals when the Maltese were down to ten men. Chris Martin's strike early in the second half which put the Scots back in front at 2-1 came when one of the Maltese players was down injured with the home fans screaming for the ball to be put out of play. Scotland went 3-1 ahead following the controversial dismissal of Caruana and the subsequent penalty kick.

Paterson, though, should be pleased with his overall contribution to the Scotland team and will surely retain his place in the team when Lithuania head to Hampden Park for Scotland's next World Cup qualifier on 8th October.

Overall, though, it was job done in the Mediterranean – and for Hearts Callum Paterson it will hopefully be the start of a long international career.