

Hearts Fightback Earns Point in Inverness

Inverness Caledonian Thistle 3 Heart of Midlothian 3

Ladbrokes Premiership, Saturday 29th October 2016 – Tulloch Caledonian Stadium

Hearts fought back for a hard-earned point in Inverness on Saturday as Robbie Neilson's side came from 2-0 down and 3-2 down to salvage a share of the spoils in their Ladbrokes Premiership game with Inverness Caledonian Thistle.

The clocks go back one hour this weekend as British Summer Time officially ends. It may be argued that Neilson might have wished the clocks went back 72 hours to before the loss to Kilmarnock on Wednesday evening. *The Edinburgh Reporter's* article on Friday evening which challenged Hearts forwards to get on their scoring boots were sentiments apparently shared by the Hearts Head Coach who dropped Conor Sammon and Tony Watt to the substitute's bench for the game in the Highland capital, replacing them with Bjorn Johnsen and Jamie Walker.

Despite those changes, Hearts start to the game had a familiar feel to the events of this week. Just five minutes had elapsed when the Caley Jags' Tremarco crossed for Doumbouva whose header smacked off the Hearts crossbar.

Hearts then threatened when Robbie Muirhead collected a pass from Arnaud Djoum and the youngster's long-range effort on goal went just past Mackay's post.

However, it was the hosts who went ahead in the 15th minute. A long ball found Draper who set up Raven for a brilliant finish which gave Hearts keeper Jack Hamilton not an earthly.

This stunned the visitors who tried to get back into the game

but then found themselves two goals own in the 33rd minute. Polwarth burst forward and found Doumbouva inside the penalty box. With the Hearts defence going a fair impression of the Highland clearances, the Caley Thistle man had time to take a touch before firing the ball past Hamilton to double the home side's lead.

At this stage the travelling Maroon Army were making their displeasure obvious. However, seven minutes before half-time, the Maroons began their fight back. A great pass from Don Cowie, playing against his former team, found Bjorn Johnsen and the big American duly fired the ball past keeper Mackay for Hearts first goal in Inverness for four years.

Half-time Inverness Caledonian Thistle 2 Hearts 1

Hearts began the second half intent to levelling the game and they duly did so just six minutes after the restart. Faycal Rherras made good progress down the left side and delivered a teasing cross into the Caley Thistle penalty box. The ball deceived Bjorn Johnsen – but also deceived the home keeper and floated into the net to bring parity.

If Robbie Neilson was looking for his team to consolidate after getting back on level terms he was to be disappointed. After Jack Hamilton saved well from Polworth, Doran got the better of Don Cowie and drilled the ball past Hamilton to put the home side back in the lead. Despair for the Hearts players and supporters as they saw their hard work seemingly undone.

Hearts, though, refused to give up. With twenty minutes left, Johnsen delivered another teasing cross which was diverted away by Caley Thistle's Josh Meekings.

Hearts substitute Tony Watt, keen to make amends for his glaring miss in Ayrshire on Wednesday evening, was proving to be a real threat as the home side struggled to keep out the visitors.

With sixteen minutes to go Hearts got the equaliser they so richly deserved. Arnaud Djoum collected the ball inside the Caley Thistle penalty box before firing home a low shot to level the game at 3-3.

Djoum almost grabbed a sensational winner three minutes from the end when his long-range effort was diverted by Don Cowie but keeper Mackay saved well.

A point rescued by Hearts who move back into third place in the Ladbrokes Premiership – leapfrogging St Johnstone who lost at home to Partick Thistle but now overtaken by Rangers who now sit in second place.

Inverness CT: Mackay, Tremarco (Raven, 10'), Warren, Meekings, Polworth, Draper, Doran (Mulraney, 82'), Vigurs (Horner, 90'), Tansey, McKay, Doumbouya.

Hearts: Hamilton, Paterson, Souttar, Rossi, Rherras (Ozturk, 60'), Djoum, Kitchen, Cowie, Walker, Johnsen (Sammon, 77'), Muirhead (Watt, 54').

Referee: Craig Thomson

Att: 3,565

Top man: Arnaud Djoum