

Hearts Go Down at Kilmarnock

Kilmarnock 2 Heart of Midlothian 0

Ladbroke's Premiership, Wednesday 26th October 2016 – Rugby Park

After Aberdeen's demise at Hamilton Academical on Tuesday evening, Hearts headed for Ayrshire twenty-four hours later knowing that victory would see them leapfrog the Dons into second place in the Ladbroke's Premiership table. The Maroons were looking for a third league win in a row and were rightly confident, so an intriguing game was in prospect. However, as so often happens, Hearts again flattered to deceive and stumbled to defeat on an evening to forget.

Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson made two changes from the team that defeated Dundee eleven days ago. Defender Faycal Rherras returned to the side having recovered from malaria which afflicted him while on World Cup duty earlier this month while Robbie Muirhead was given a starting place against his former club at the expense of Jamie Walker.

On the recently narrowed Rugby Park pitch, Kilmarnock were first to threaten after just three minutes when Jones saw his effort on goal cleared by John Souttar.

The visitors passed up a great chance to take the lead moments later when a cross from Robbie Muirhead found Tony Watt just two yards out but the former Celtic striker contrived to squander the opportunity allowing former Hearts keeper MacDonald to collect the ball.

It was mostly Killie thereafter and Coulibaly went close with a free-kick in the 15th minute. That said, Tony Watt fed Conor Sammon but the former Killie striker's shot on goal was weak, much to the delight of the home support.

It was no real surprise when Killie took the lead in the 22nd minute. The aforementioned Coulibaly waltzed past the Hearts defence before firing in a brilliant shot beyond Jack Hamilton for a superb goal.

Hearts tried to fight back when Robbie Muirhead tested home keeper MacDonald with a free-kick from 25 yards but the former Hearts man saved well.

It was the current Hearts keeper who saved his team from going 2-0 down just before half-time when he saved brilliantly from the dangerous Coulibaly.

Half-time Kilmarnock 1 Hearts 0

Hearts made a sluggish start to the second half but in the 55th minute Sammon thought he had equalised only for the officials to decree he had ran the ball behind the line before firing the ball into the net.

That man Coulibaly was causing Hearts all kinds of problems and he set up McKenzie whose 20-yard effort clipped the Hearts crossbar.

Hearts took off Conor Sammon and Tony Watt and replaced them with Bjorn Johnsen and Jamie Walker and it was Walker who nearly equalised when he latched on to a long ball from John Souttar but, again, MacDonald saved well.

With 18 minutes to go the game was all but over when Killie scored again. Slack play from Don Cowie enabled McKenzie to pass to Smith whose first-time shot sailed over Jack Hamilton to the delight of the home support.

There was one final chance for the visitors but substitute Bjorn Johnsen squandered a chance from six yards and the travelling Maroon Army headed for the exits.

So, Hearts, hoping to go second in the Ladbrokes Premiership,

fall to fourth place having been overtaken by St Johnstone on a hugely disappointing night for the Maroons.

Kilmarnock: MacDonald, S.Smith, Addison, McKenzie, Dicker, Jones (Frizzell, 89'), Tyson (K. Boyd, 89'), S.Boyd, Coulibaly, Taylor, Hendrie.

Hearts: Hamilton, Paterson, Souttar, Rossi, Rherras, Djoum, Kitchen (Buaben, 88'), Cowie, Muirhead, Watt (Walker, 62'), Sammon (Johnsen, 62').

Referee: Andrew Dallas

Att: 3,917

Top man: John Souttar