

Hearts Beaten by Aberdeen at Tynecastle



Heart of Midlothian 0 Aberdeen 1

Ladbrokes Premiership, Friday 30th December 2016 – Tynecastle

Another momentous year for Heart of Midlothian ended on Friday evening when Aberdeen visited Gorgie as third-place took on fourth in the Ladbrokes Premiership. In recent seasons, Hearts v Aberdeen games at Tynecastle have been raucous affairs and with the old stadium packed to the rafters, another enthralling game was in prospect. Sadly, it didn't live up to expectations with the Dons dominating the game and thoroughly deserving a win that takes them six points clear of Hearts in the league.

Hearts Head Coach Ian Cathro made a couple of changes from the team which put four goals past Kilmarnock on Tuesday evening. Injured pair Callum Paterson and Prince Buaben were replaced by Liam Smith and Don Cowie respectively.

Tynecastle was packed yet again with a sizeable support down from the Granite City. But the huge crowd was given little to shout about in a dismal first half, particularly from a Hearts point of view.

It took 15 minutes for the first real chance of the game when Aberdeen's Reynolds was given a free header at goal from McGinn's corner from the right – but he headed over.

Hearts finally had an attempt at goal on 20 minutes but Jamie Walker's free-kick was weak and straight at Dons keeper Lewis.

Hearts had goalkeeper Jack Hamilton to thank for keeping the

scoreline blank when he saved smartly from McLean with the Hearts defence again looking at sixes and sevens.

The keeper was at it again when he saved from McGinn before the Dons hit the post two minutes from half-time through a long-range effort from Shinnie. The rebound fell to Rooney who seemed certain to score – but the striker hooked his shot over the bar.

Referee Willie Collum blew for half-time moments later and the Hearts players trooped off to some boos from a frustrated home support.

Half-time Hearts 0 Aberdeen 0



The second half continued in the same manner as the first. Logan had a chance for the visitors but his shot on goal took a deflection and went wide.

Hearts at last created an opportunity in the 64th minute when Liam Smith found himself unmarked when going for Don Cowie's corner but, like the Reynolds miss for the visitors in the first half, the full back's header was too high.

Two minutes later the goal Aberdeen had threatened all night finally arrived. McGinn burst down the right wing and his cross into the penalty box evaded a trailing Hearts defence allowing Haynes to hammer the ball past Hamilton for a well-deserved goal.

Jack Hamilton was called upon again eight minutes from the end when he saved well from McLean before Hearts suddenly realised they were running out of time to save the game.

Jamie Walker was posing the Dons defence problems and with four minutes to go, he danced his way into the Aberdeen penalty box only to be denied by Dons keeper Lewis.

The final chance of a disappointing evening fell to Don Cowie but the veteran midfielder headed over.

A hugely disappointing result and performance from Hearts whose hopes of getting second place in the Ladbrokes Premiership now seem to be remote.

Head Coach Ian Cathro gave an honest assessment after the game.

“I thought in the opening stages, we lost the initial battle to set the tone and the tempo of how the game would be played,” he told the official Hearts website. “Aberdeen were allowed to play the type of game they prefer, so we had to adjust our tactics, and the players deserve credit for getting to half time at 0-0.

“Should it have been 0-0 at the break? That’s questionable. We had to scrap and fight, and then make second half adjustments, which gave us the chance to play a bit more. We could have attacked quicker, and stayed higher up the pitch. We didn’t do it enough to create chances, though.

“We made mistakes defending, which obviously need improving upon, and as a result of that, we’ve lost the game.”

“The window, and break, brings us an opportunity to assess the changes we need to make, and we will look to improve what we have available. I don’t believe we need to do a lot in January. We’re not obsessed with it, but we can make improvements.

“We’ve learned a lot about everyone this month, and we need to grow to be a team capable of performing consistently throughout. There’s a lot of work ahead of us to make sure we do that.”

It seemed to this reporter that many of the Hearts players didn’t seem to know what they were meant to be doing and this

handed the initiative to the visitors. Cathro will surely look to bring in a couple of defenders and a midfield player when the January transfer window opens in a couple of days.

At least he now has three weeks to make what adjustments he feels fit.

Hearts: Hamilton, L.Smith, Souttar, Rossi (Muirhead, 82'), Rherras, Nowak, Kitchen, Cowie, Walker, Djoum (Currie, 74'), Johnsen.

Aberdeen: Lewis, Logan, Shinnie, Considine, Taylor, Reynolds, McLean, Rooney, McGinn (O'Connor, 87'), Hayes, Jack.

Referee: Willie Collum

Att: 16,630

Top Man: Jack Hamilton