

Hearts Throw Away Two-Goal Lead at Dundee

Dundee 3 Heart of Midlothian 2

Ladbrokes Premiership – Friday 23rd December 2016, Dens Park

Christmas is a time for giving and Hearts demonstrated this two days before the big day by delivering three points – sadly, not to the 1,400 strong travelling Maroon Army but to their hosts.

In the proverbial game of two halves, Ian Cathro's side threw away a two-goal lead as Paul Hartley's Dundee snatched an injury time winner on a dramatic night at Dens Park.

Cathro made one enforced change to the Hearts team that struggled against Partick Thistle at the weekend and it was a surprising one. Krystian Nowak, having been on the substitute's bench for several weeks now, made his first team debut by replacing the injured Prince Buaben.

Despite the stormy conditions which has affected Scotland for much of the day, Hearts yet again took a huge travelling support and they were soon rewarded for their efforts to get to Dundee. After only three minutes, Jamie Walker was fouled inside the penalty box. Referee Kevin Clancy pointed to the spot and Walker duly despatched the penalty kick. 1-0 to Hearts before some of the fans had taken their seats.

Debutant Krystian Nowak almost made it 2-0 four minutes later with a shot which clipped the post; however, had it been on target it wouldn't have counted as the defender was offside.

It was all Hearts in the opening stages. The unlikely figure of John Souttar – the former Dundee United defender was getting plenty of stick from the home fans – produced a superb pass for Jamie Walker who forced keeper Bain into a fine save.

The home side came more into the game and a mistake from Nowak allowed Wighton to set up Vincent but the Dundee man skied his effort on goal well over.

Back came Hearts and Callum Paterson headed Don Cowie's corner goalwards but Bain produced another fine save. Then Bjorn Johnsen had a chance inside the penalty area but his effort was straight at Bain.

John Souttar was next to try his luck and his long-range effort produced more heroics from the Dundee keeper.

It had been a pleasing first half from Hearts and they fully deserved their ovation from the Maroon Army at half-time. However, their old failing of not taking their chances – Walker, Djoum and Paterson all had chances to score – would come back to haunt them.

Half-time Dundee 0 Hearts 1



Hearts began the second half the way they began the first – by scoring within three minutes. Don Cowie's free-kick was met by the head of Callum Paterson who headed past Bain and the Jambos were two goals ahead.

But if Hearts thought they were well on their way to their first away win since September they were sadly mistaken.

In the 54th minute, poor defensive play from Hearts – a recurring theme this season – allowed O'Dea to fire past Jack Hamilton to make it 2-1; and the game changed.

That said, Jamie Walker missed a glorious chance to restore Hearts two goal lead moments later but he fired over from inside the penalty box and a glorious chance was gone.

There was a moment of controversy when Don Cowie was pole-axed by keeper Bain which resulted in the former Watford player needing treatment for a neck injury and the game being stopped

for seven minutes. Cowie had to come off and was replaced by Robbie Muirhead.

With twenty minutes left, Dundee equalised when Vincent found McGowan who fired past Jack Hamilton.

It was mostly Dundee now and with a minute to go it looked like they would snatch the winner when more poor defending from Hearts saw Wighton completely unmarked inside the penalty box – but the striker headed straight at a grateful Jack Hamilton.

However, it was only a temporary reprieve. Three minutes into the nine minutes of injury time – the Cowie injury was the main reason for the length of the time added on – a free-kick from Hateley was headed home by Haber to grab all three points for Dundee to send the home fans delirious.

Dejection for Hearts who looked shell-shocked as they trooped off the Dens Park turf when the final whistle blew moments later.

Dundee: Bain, Holt, Vincent, O'Dea, Hateley, O'Hara (McGowan, 53'), Haber, Gadzhalov, Kerr, Wighton, Gomis (Etxabeguren, 46').

Hearts: Hamilton, Paterson, Souttar, Rossi, L.Smith (Rherras, 90'), Kitchen, Cowie (Muirhead, 64'), Nowak, Walker (Watt, 90'), Djoum, Johnsen.

Ref: Kevin Clancy

Att: 6,160

Top People: The travelling Hearts supporters, all 1,400 of them, who deserved much more for their efforts.