

A Miserable Week For Hearts Ends With Another Defeat



Partick Thistle 2 Heart of Midlothian 0

Ladbrokes Premiership, Saturday 25th February 2017 – Firhill

That was the week that was. A miserable eight days for everyone associated with Heart of Midlothian ended in all-too familiar fashion in Glasgow on Saturday when the Jambos followed up their pitiful showings against Inverness Caledonian Thistle and Hibernian with another abject display as Partick Thistle eased to a 2-0 win in the Ladbrokes Premiership at Firhill.

Hearts Head Coach Ian Cathro said in the aftermath of the bitter Scottish Cup elimination at the hands of city rivals Hibernian that the players had a lot of making up to do to the fans. He made three changes from that team – captain Perry Kitchen and Malaury Martin stepped aside for Krystian Nowak and youngster Rory Currie while Aaron Hughes was originally listed to play but got injured during the warm-up. Faycal Rherras replaced him with Lennard Sowah moving to the centre of the defence – a switch which the Ghanaian-German found uncomfortable to adjust to.

Despite the huge let-down of Wednesday evening in Leith, there was still a sizeable contingent of Hearts fans at Firhill. However, they were holding their collective heads in their hands after just five minutes when Thistle took the lead. A free-kick into the Hearts penalty box was treated nonchalantly by the visiting defence and Doolan blasted the ball past Hearts keeper Jack Hamilton to put the home side a goal ahead.

The feeling among the disgruntled Maroon Army was ‘here we go

again'.

Hearts struggled to make any impact on the game. Only Jamie Walker seemed interested in having a crack at goal but his long-range efforts never threatened to bring an equaliser.

Tziolis then tried an effort after being set up by Goncalves but, like Walker's attempts, Thistle weren't troubled.

In fact, the home side almost doubled their lead when Doolan forced a brilliant save from Jack Hamilton.

As if Hearts didn't have enough problems they were given another one when Jamie Walker had to be replaced by Sam Nicholson just before half-time as he was having problems with his vision. The Hearts support were probably wishing they couldn't see properly either...

Half-time Partick Thistle 1 Hearts 0

The second half continued in much the same fashion as the first. Cathro decided a further change was required after 58 minutes as he introduced Dylan Bikey who replaced Rory Currie.

If the Maroon Army were hoping the former Stirling Albion striker might make an immediate impact they were to be disappointed as Hearts were reduced to ten men just two minutes later. Isma Goncalves, having already been booked, received a second yellow card following a late challenge meaning the former St Mirren striker left the field for an early bath.

In an afternoon of long-range efforts, Faycal Rherras was the latest Hearts player to try his luck after collecting a free-kick from Arnaud Djoum but, like so many of the others, his shot on goal sailed over the bar.

Thistle clinched a deserved victory with 18 minutes left. Osman crossed for Lindsay to fire home and it was 2-0 to the home side.

Game over. And, thankfully, week over.

Ian Cathro delivered some familiar words after the game. He told the official Hearts website:

"We face up to the situation we're in. We understand it, we're aware of it and we have to deal with it.

"We can get out of the difficult moment by winning the game on Wednesday night. And winning the game after that.

"Ultimately no, we didn't get the response that we were looking for. We wanted to win the game, we wanted to perform in a more dominant way, so no.

"What this situation is, is it's a difficult moment. We said on Wednesday night that that was a game of such magnitude that we didn't do enough to give everybody what they needed to see from the team they love.

"Today, we've not done it either. So everything that was said on Wednesday, it's the same situation. And we have to progress. It's the same situation.

"This is what happens in these difficult situations. A variety of people will have them one, two, three times a season. It could happen and does happen and it goes round and round.

"What's important is that everyone is together, is clear in their minds of what their responsibilities are, and right now everybody's responsibility is to find more, to be clear and honest with themselves as to what they're giving, what everybody's giving each other and that is what through time earns back the trust of the fans."

"I want the fans to come and expect us to be perfect from the start of the game. I want them to be what they are. I want them to be how they feel.

"That's what makes playing for this club a little bit more

difficult than playing for other clubs. It matters so much and they're powerful. I want them to feel how they feel and be how they are."

The Hearts Head Coach said much the same thing after the defeat at Easter Road on Wednesday. Sometimes, words are simply not enough.

Partick Thistle: Cerny, Dumbuya (Elliott, 51'), Booth, Lindsay, Osman, Doolan (Azeez, 82'), Erskine (Lawless, 75'), Barton, Devine, Keown, Edwards.

Hearts: Hamilton, Struna, Avlonitis, Rherras (Choulay, 80'), Sowah, Tziolis, Nowak, Djoum, Walker (Nicholson, 42'), Currie (Bikey, 58'), Isma.

Att: 4,143

Referee: Nick Walsh

Top Man: Nope, sorry, can't think of anyone in a Hearts shirt.