

Hearts Slip to Another Defeat



Heart of Midlothian 0 Ross County 1

Ladbrokes Premiership, Wednesday 1st March 2017 – Tynecastle

A week ago, Hearts exited the William Hill Scottish Cup with barely a whimper after losing 3-1 to Hibernian. This was followed by a 2-0 defeat at Partick Thistle at the weekend. So, the atmosphere at Tynecastle on Wednesday evening as Ross County visited Gorgie was understandably muted. By the end of the night with Hearts falling to another defeat – their third in eight days – it was quite funereal.

Hearts Head Coach Ian Cathro brought back Don Cowie, Sam Nicholson, Choulay and Bjorn Johnsen into the team following the loss at Firhill on Saturday – Faycal Rherras and Rory Currie dropped to the substitutes' bench with Isma Goncalves suspended and Jamie Walker still feeling the effects of his head knock on Saturday.

Hearts were playing on the newly laid Tynecastle pitch but little happened of any note until the tenth minute when County's Fraser fired in a long-range effort which went wide.

Hearts then had a chance when Arnaud Djoum set up Andraz Struna but the defender's shot on goal was saved by County keeper Fox.

Tynecastle is renowned for its atmosphere but it was in keeping with the general mood in Gorgie that there wasn't much noise emanating from the stands. Bjorn Johnsen was the next to try his luck in the 20th minute from just outside the penalty box but his shot was high and wide.

It was a miss Hearts almost immediately regretted as McEveley went close with a shot which went just wide.

Twelve minutes before half-time, Hearts almost broke the deadlock. Great play from Djoum saw the Cameroon African Cup of Nations winner hit the crossbar from 25 yards – only for Johnsen to blast the rebound over.

Hearts under fire keeper Jack Hamilton then came to his side's rescue with two fine saves from County's Schalk.

Half-time: Hearts 0 Ross County 0

The feeling of gloom at Tynecastle deepened five minutes into the second half when County took the lead. Alex Tziolis got into a fankle with Naismith's cross into the Hearts penalty area and Schalk capitalised to score.

Schalk was proving a real threat and he nearly scored a second midway through the second half but Hamilton saved his header. Hearts hit the crossbar again with ten minutes to go when Avlonitis was denied and there was a general feeling this was not to be Hearts night – in keeping with the last eight days.

The final whistle blew with more jeers from a frustrated Hearts support.

Hearts: Hamilton, Struna, Nowak, Avlonitis, Sowah, Tziolis, Cowie (Martin, 78'), Djoum, Choulay (Currie, 67'), Nicholson, Johnsen (Bikey, 77').

Ross County: Fox, Fraser, Naismith, McEveley (Tumilty, 78'), Woods (O'Brien, 68'), Boyce, Curran, Chow, Davies, Schalk (Gardyne, 81'), Van Der Weg.

Referee: Alan Muir

Att: 15,470

Top man: Arnaud Djoum