

Hearts Draw A Blank At Rugby Park



Kilmarnock 0 Heart of Midlothian 0

Ladbrokes Premiership, Friday 14th April 2017 – Rugby Park

There was something appropriate about Kilmarnock and Hearts playing on the evening of Good Friday. The Christian faith marks this day as the time Jesus suffered by crucifixion. Without wishing to incur accusations of blasphemy, supporters of Hearts and Kilmarnock endured suffering of their own after a tedious affair in Ayrshire.

Hearts Head Coach Ian Cathro opted to go with the same team that defeated Dundee at Tynecastle six days ago.

On a showery, chilly spring evening, a crowd of just over 4,000 were looking for something to warm them up. They didn't get it in a truly awful first half which could be summed up from a Hearts perspective thus:

Pass, pass, pass, pass, pass (usually sideways), give the ball away. The highlights of that first half are below...

Half-time Kilmarnock 0 Hearts 0

The second half was little better although Hearts finally managed an attempt on target in the 67th minute when Goncalves had a header saved by Killie keeper Woodman.

The introduction of substitute Choulay initially brought some spark to the visitors and his cross into the penalty box was almost met by Andras Struna but the Slovenian misjudged the flight of the ball and the chance was gone.

Jamie Walker then turned on the edge of the box but, in keeping with the evening, his effort was weak and straight at the Killie keeper.

Isma Goncalves had a great chance to steal the game for Hearts towards the end but his low shot on goal was deflected just inches wide for a corner. The same player then had an opportunity in the six yard box after fine play from Liam Smith but the striker inexplicably let the ball run from him rather than strike for goal.

The home side had a chance to take all three points with three minutes left when Boyd fired in free-kick that went wide.

The travelling Maroon Army made their feelings known at the end of the game. It was another 90 minutes of their lives they won't get back.

After the game, Ian Cathro told BBC Radio Scotland: "A point isn't acceptable because it's not what we wanted.

"We're disappointed that we've not managed to get the win. On reflection, maybe we have to accept it given the way the game panned out towards the end. Initially we controlled the match but didn't create enough chances. We didn't have any threat in the final third.

"Second half we had a couple of chances which I would expect to normally go in and I'm sure the guys involved will say the same. But today they didn't.

"There's not tremendous confidence levels there but we're building those things. A 0-0 away from home we can't consider a disaster but we are disappointed."

Disappointed is something of an understatement...

Kilmarnock: Woodman, Hendrie, Dicker, Ajer, Taylor, Smith, Wilson, Roberts, Longstaff, Jones, Boyd

Hearts: Hamilton, Smith, Buaben, Nowak, Struna, Kitchen, Tziolis, Djoum, Cowie, Walker, Goncalves.

Referee: Euan Anderson

Att: 4,110

Top man: The men, women and children – 617 of them – who made up the away support. They probably wished they hadn't bothered.