

Hearts Ease Past East Fife



Hearts 3 East Fife 0

Betfred Cup, Saturday 22nd July 2017 – Tynecastle

Hearts made it two wins from two games in the group stages of the Betfred Cup when they defeated League One side East Fife at Tynecastle on Saturday.

Goals from new signings Christophe Berra and Kyle Lafferty – who now has three goals in two games – ensured the Jambos continued their winning start to the season.

Hearts Head Coach Ian Cathro made some changes to his defence following the narrow win in Elgin on Tuesday evening. Rafal Grzelak – a first half substitute at Borough Briggs – started against the Fifers while there was a welcome return for Jordan McGhee, back from his loan spell at Middlesbrough, and an even bigger welcome for John Souttar, playing his first game in six months following injury. Ashley Smith-Brown, Aaron Hughes and Krystian Nowak dropped out.

It may be the third week in July but the weather in Edinburgh was more akin to the third week in November as wind and rain lashed Tynecastle which resembled a building site with the on-going reconstruction of the main stand.

As one would expect against lower-league opponents, Hearts dominated the game but the goals aren't quite flowing yet. The impressive Michael Smith saw his effort on goal pushed on to the post by East Fife keeper Goodfellow in the sixth minute before Kyle Lafferty headed wide when he really should have scored.

After Isma Goncalves was denied by Goodfellow, Hearts finally

made the breakthrough when Kyle Lafferty headed home John Souttar's cross in the 22nd minute.

Great play from Jamie Walker almost doubled Hearts advantage but his effort on goal was brilliantly saved by Goodfellow.

Half-time Hearts 1 East Fife 0

Hearts gave a debut to Alex Petkov at the start of the second half as he replaced John Souttar. There was a worrying start to the second half for the home side when keeper Jack Hamilton had to look lively to prevent Willis from drawing the Fifers level. The Scottish summer was contriving to make conditions difficult with the driving rain and wind making calls for summer football seem a tad meaningless.

With 20 minutes to go, Hearts put the tie to bed when captain Christophe Berra headed home substitute Malaury Martin's corner and the Hearts fans in the 6,000 plus crowd breathed more easily.

After Jamie Walker became the next home player to miss a golden opportunity to score, Hearts finally got a third goal when they were awarded a penalty kick after Goncalves was brought down by Gordon who received his second yellow card and a subsequent red. Kyle Lafferty made no mistake with the spot-kick, another bit of relief for the Maroon Army given Hearts recent woeful record with penalty kicks.

Hearts continue their Betfred Cup campaign on Tuesday evening with a trip to Peterhead who lost 5-1 to Dunfermline Athletic in the other Group B game today.

Hearts: Hamilton, M.Smith, Grzelak, Souttar (Petkov, 46'), McGhee, Berra, Walker (Stockton, 77'), Buaben, Cowie (Martin, 61'), Lafferty, Goncalves.

East Fife: Goodfellow, Dunsmore, Docherty, Watson, Slattery, Duggan, Wilson, Millar, Gordon, Reilly (Flanagan, 76'),

Willis.

Ref: Nick Walsh

Att: 6,265

Top Man: Kyle Lafferty – despite that glaring miss in the first half.