

Hearts Win at Kilmarnock



Kilmarnock 0 Hearts 1

Ladbrokes Premiership, Saturday 12th August 2017 – Rugby Park

Hearts recorded their first Ladbrokes Premiership win of the season – and their first league win away from Edinburgh since February – with what is euphemistically termed as a ‘hard-fought’ win at Kilmarnock on Saturday.

An early goal from Isma Goncalves was enough to give the Maroons all three points which, given the difficult start to the season, will be much welcomed by interim Head Coach Jon Daly.

Daly made three changes from the Hearts team that succumbed to Celtic seven days ago. Prince Buaben, Lewis Moore and Aaron Hughes were replaced by newcomer Connor Randall, John Souttar and Isma Goncalves. Jamie Walker was back and was named as a substitute although he remained on the bench for the 90 minutes.

After a cagey start, Hearts went ahead in just five minutes. Michael Smith fed Goncalves who eased passed Broadfoot and fired home from around 20 yards.

Goncalves should have made it 2-0 for the visitors in the 20th minute when, after playing a neat one-two with Kyle Lafferty, attempted to take the ball round former Hearts keeper Jamie MacDonald but was denied by a fine save.

However, that was as exciting as it got in the first half with both sides producing lots of effort but little in the way of cohesive football.

Half-time Kilmarnock 0 Hearts 1

If truth be told the second half wasn't much different to the first. Killie persisted with long balls to the veteran striker Kris Boyd but Hearts defensive duo of Christophe Berra and John Souttar were equal to the task.

However, Killie should have equalised when McKenzie was through on goal as the Rugby Park team hit on the counter-attack. Hearts keeper Jack Hamilton came to the Jambos rescue with a brilliant save which he immediately followed with another fine save from the rebound.

Kyle Lafferty should have put Hearts in a much more comfortable position but, following a cross from Don Cowie, the former Rangers striker took a fresh-air swipe at the ball, much to the chagrin of his team-mates.

Isma Goncalves was then involved in a couple of incidents. Firstly, he forced a fine save from MacDonald before becoming involved in a tussle with Killie's Broadfoot on the edge of the penalty box. After consulting with his assistant, referee Stephen Finnie sent both players off.

Don Cowie was proving to be a threat and he had an overhead kick and another attempt on goal, neither of which unduly troubled Jamie MacDonald.

The game fizzled out and while it was far from a classic the result meant Hearts are off and running in the Ladbrokes Premiership this season – a season of undoubted transition.

Jon Daly was satisfied after the game. He told BBC Scotland:

"It's a massive win. We haven't won here since April 2013 so it shows how difficult a place it is to come. The players showed a lot of the characteristics that people have questioned over the last while – determination, the will to fight and hard work. I thought we saw that in abundance

today."

Kilmarnock: MacDonald, Taylor (O'Donnell, 71'), Broadfoot, Boyd, McKenzie, Thomas, Burke (Jones, 46'), Erwin, Greer, Wilson (Samizadeh, 87'), Frizzell.

Hearts: Hamilton, M. Smith, Souttar, Berra, Brandon (Nowak, 80'), Grzelak, Djoum, Randall, Cowie (Martin, 90'), Lafferty (Stockton, 84'), Isma.

Referee: Stephen Finnie

Att: 5,076

Top man: Don Cowie