

Hearts Face Selection Crisis Ahead of Celtic Game



Hearts are facing a selection crisis ahead of Sunday's Ladbrokes Premiership game with league champions Celtic at Tynecastle Park.

Midfielder Arnaud Djoum will definitely be missing through injury while Jamie Walker is unlikely to be fit enough in time to face Brendan Rodgers side who are unbeaten in the league so far, this season. Defender Aaron Hughes has only been given a slim chance of making it while fellow defender John Souttar will definitely miss the game due to suspension.

It's likely, therefore, that Hearts Head Coach Craig Levein will slot Prince Buaben into the back four and again rely on teenagers Anthony McDonald, Harry Cochrane, Jamie Brandon and possibly Lewis Moore.

Levein told the official Hearts website:

"Arnaud got a kick in his achilles on Tuesday and as a result he'll probably be out until the winter break, so that's a bit of a blow.

"Jamie Walker is better but he's unlikely to be ready for Sunday. Aaron Hughes is also getting better but again I don't think he'll be ready for Sunday. Obviously, we have John Souttar suspended as well so it's not ideal.

"We're going to try and beat Celtic. Listen, they've got the best players in the league and their 69-game unbeaten run is a remarkable statistic. But they have at times been close to losing matches and all of the teams, like ourselves, are relying on performing to the maximum and Celtic not being at

their best.”

As for playing the youngsters, Levein is unfazed. “As much as you can talk about risks and worries, I’ve been thrilled with how they’ve coped with each individual situation.

“The supporters have been great with them as well. They’re very educated, they recognise that a young player at 16 is very different from a young player at 19. So, they understand that we’re in a bit of a spot here and some of the youngsters are playing because of that.”

Kick-off for Sunday’s clash is 12.30pm. You can read Mike Smith’s match report in The Edinburgh Reporter on Sunday evening.