

Hearts Win Again to Extend Lead at the Top



Kilmarnock 0 Heart of Midlothian 1

Ladbrokes Premiership – Saturday 25th August 2018 – Rugby Park

Hearts extended their lead at the top of the Ladbrokes Premiership to four points after a hard-fought but deserved win at Kilmarnock on Saturday. Striker Uche Ikpeazu was the matchwinner with a goal towards the end of the game as the Jambos maintained their 100% per cent league record – the only team in Scotland to have maintained this in season 2018/19.

Hearts boss Craig Levein gave new defender Jimmy Dunne his debut while young Calumn Morrison replaced Steven MacLean.

A tight game between two determined teams tilted in Hearts favour midway through the second half when Killie's Gary Dicker was shown a red card by referee Willie Collum after a late challenge on Hearts Callumn Morrison.

The visitors went in front with eight minutes left when Uche Ikpeazu defied the odds to get his head to Peter Haring's cross to steer the ball beyond former Hearts keeper Jamie MacDonald before racing across Killie's plastic pitch to celebrate with Craig Levein and Austin MacPhee.

A fine win for Hearts who overcame the loss of two of their best players – Kyle Lafferty who joined Rangers during the week and captain Christophe Berra who is out injured until early next year – and a difficult playing surface to take three points against a team who have become something of a bogey side in recent years.

Craig Levein was, of course, a happy man after the game. He told BBC Sport Scotland:

"I felt we deserved to win the match. We dominated the match in the first half. The second half, we had more of the ball but obviously because of the sending off and we created more chances."

"Uche Ikpeazu loves celebrating goals, he loves scoring goals. He wasn't at his best last week against Dunfermline but certainly he was back to his best today and I'm thrilled for him, for the players and also, very importantly, for the supporters that came down."

It's still very early days, of course, but Hearts supporters are beginning to get excited about their team again.

Kilmarnock: MacDonald, O'Donnell, Broadfoot, Findlay, Taylor (Thomas, 84'), Power, Dicker, Jones, Burke, Ndjoli (Brophy, 74'), K. Boyd (Wilson, 68').

Hearts: Zlamal, M. Smith (McDonald, 71'), Souttar, Dunne, Garuccio, Morrison, Lee, Haring, Mulraney (MacLean, 60'), Naismith, Ikpeazu.

Referee: Willie Collum

Attendance: 6,239

Top man: Uche Ikpeazu. What a signing the big man is proving to be.

Mike Smith's new book – The Team For Me: 50 Years of Following Hearts – is out at the end of next week. You can pre-order it [here](#).