

First Defeat of the Season for League Leaders Hearts



Rangers 3 Heart of Midlothian 1

Ladbrokes Premiership – Sunday 7th October 2018 – Ibrox

Hearts unbeaten record this season came to an end on a dreich Sunday afternoon in Glasgow as the Ladbrokes Premiership leaders came crashing down to earth in somewhat predictable fashion with a 3-1 defeat from Rangers. To compound a miserable afternoon for the Gorgie men, defender Michael Smith was sent off after receiving two yellow cards.

Hearts manager Craig Levein made one change from the side that defeated St Johnstone last week, with striker Uche Ikpeazu returning to the side from injury.

Levein's men got off to a terrible start. After only three minutes a free-kick was lofted into the Hearts penalty box. The maroon defence stood like statues waiting for an offside decision that never arrived – Uche Ikpeazu had played the Rangers players onside. This allowed Morelos to slip the ball to Kent who had the easiest of opportunities to stroke the ball into the empty net.

Steven Naismith and Ikpeazu had chances to equalise but it was Hearts defensive failings that again let them down and led to Rangers doubling their lead just ten minutes later. Demetri Mitchell was the culprit this time as he gave the ball away to Candeias who cross for Morelos to score.

Ikpeazu appealed for a penalty after he was fouled inside the penalty box, but his appeal was ignored by referee John

Beaton.

Shortly after the half-hour mark it was game over. Morelos headed Tavernier's cross and while Hearts keeper Bobby Zlamal saved the effort the ball fell to Arfield who netted Rangers third goal.

Any faint hopes of a Hearts revival were snuffed out ten minutes into the second half when Michael Smith – having already been booked – clattered into Flanagan leaving referee John Beaton little alternative but to show the Northern Irishman a second yellow card followed by a red.

Still, the ten men of Hearts kept battling and Jimmy Dunne steered home Olly Lee's free-kick midway through the second half to pull a goal back. But it was too little too late as Hearts succumbed to their first defeat of the season.

However, the Maroons remain top of the league, two points clear of Hibernian.

Rangers: McGregor, Tavernier, Worrall, Goldson, Ejaria (Jack, 66'), Kent, Flanagan, Morelos, Candeias (Lafferty, 87'), Coulibaly, Arfield (Halliday, 83').

Hearts: Zlamal, Smith, Dunne, Souttar, Haring, Lee (Garuccio, 73'), Djoum, Mitchell (Wighton, 79'), Naismith, MacLean (Dikamona, 57'), Ikpeazu.

Referee: John Beaton