

Football famine before festive feast

Scotland's forthcoming Nations League fixtures with Albania and Israel may be important regarding the fortunes of the national team but, inevitably, they are playing havoc with the domestic fixtures.

November will be the famine before the festive feast for Hearts.

The penultimate month of the year sees Craig Levein's side play just three games in the Ladbrokes Premiership – and only one of these is at Tynecastle. The Maroons travel to Celtic Park to face the league champions at the beginning of the month followed by their sole league game at Tynecastle – against Kilmarnock on 10 November. They then travel to Paisley to take on St Mirren on 24th November.

Contrast this with the fixtures for December when Hearts are scheduled to play seven league games; Rangers, Motherwell and Hamilton Academical are due to visit Gorgie while the Maroon Army will be on the march to St Johnstone, Livingston – this fixture will be on Friday 14 December – and Aberdeen before the quick manoeuvre to Easter Road to play Hibernian on 29 December.

It will be a test of endurance for the players. But at least it enables the Hearts support to escape the perils of Christmas shopping