

# **Hearts battle to Scottish Cup win**

**Heart of Midlothian 1 Livingston 0**

**William Hill Scottish Cup 4<sup>th</sup> round –  
Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019 – Tynecastle**

**Hearts returned to action after the winter break by exacting a measure of revenge – albeit a small one – on Livingston by knocking the West Lothian team out of the Scottish Cup at Tynecastle. The much-maligned Sean Clare was the unlikely hero, scoring the game's only goal with a sublime finish early in the second half. It was a small payback for the 5-0 trouncing Craig Levein's men suffered at the Tony Macaroni**

# Stadium last month.

It seems ages since Hearts were last in action – victory at Hibernian in the final game of 2018 – and Levein made three changes from that team that won at Easter Road. There were debuts for new signings David Vanecek and Conor Shaughnessy while Callum Morrison also returned. Marcus Godhino and Clevid Dikamona made way while Peter Haring missed out having recently undergone a hernia operation.

If truth be told it was an awful first half with the visitors having the best of the chances through Hardie and Wylde although Hearts came more into the action towards half-time with Olly Lee attempting a trademark long-range effort which Livvy keeper Kelly did well to block.

Steven Naismith then had the ball in the net but was correctly ruled offside.

Craig Levein may well have had a couple of choice words to say to his troops at the interval because Hearts sprang out the traps at the start of the second half and broke the deadlock after just three minutes with a fine goal.

A fine pass from Naismith found David Vanecek who flicked the ball to Sean Clare. The Englishman struck the ball sweetly, curling a delightful shot past keeper Kelly and into the corner of the net. Clare's first goal in maroon had been a long time

coming and he ran towards the cheering Hearts support with his fingers in his ears as if to say he had just ignored some of the unjustified criticism he has received of late.

Callumn Morrison almost doubled Hearts advantage moments later when he blasted in an effort on goal only for Halkett to scramble the ball off the goal line.

Livingston threw men forward towards the end of the game in a desperate attempt to force a replay, but Hearts held on to secure victory.

Hearts will now face junior side Auchinleck Talbot – the heroes of the Scottish Cup fourth round following their shock victory over Championship challengers Ayr United – in the fifth round on the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> February.

Hearts Assistant Manager Austin MacPhee spoke to the official Hearts website after the game.

*“We knew it wasn’t going to be an easy game. The last two games against them, we obviously not scored against them for a start, and we know what happened down there when we lost badly, but that’s three wins in a row now and we’re in the next round of the cup.*

*“It was a really positive performance from our new players. I thought in the first half, David took a bit of time to get going but he got better as the game went on and he’s still struggling for match fitness, which is something that we’ll be working on.*

*“Conor was excellent. He looks like another John Souttar in*

*the way which he uses the ball, and he was also very commanding in the air against a team that asks you a lot of questions on how to defend. So, we're delighted to get them through the game.*

MacPhee was obviously thrilled to see Sean Clare finally score his first goal for Hearts. He added "*Liam Fox said to Sean Clare at half time 'Sean, when are you going to arrive?' and he actually did it within two minutes.*

*"We were really excited when we signed Sean and we still are. He's got huge potential and is very young, so we're delighted that we've got him on a three-year contract.*

*"We believe he's going to get better all the time and he's already showing that. I'm delighted for him today that he was ultimately the difference in the tie."*

On Hearts being drawn against junior side Auchinleck Talbot in the fifth round at Tynecastle, MacPhee added "*Gary Locke tells me Auchinleck Talbot were here before in the Scottish Cup and scored a goal which was incorrectly ruled out for offside. So, the players should know how tough it's going to be. But hopefully it's an omen as the last time Hearts defeated Talbot we went on to win the cup!*"

Hearts

are back in action again on Wednesday evening on league business against Dundee at Tynecastle.

**Hearts:** Doyle, Smith, Shaughnessy, Berra, Lee, Clare (Bozanic, 79'), Djoum, Naismith, Garuccio, Vanecek, Morrison (Mulraney, 86').

**Livingston:** Kelly, Lithgow, Byrne, Jacobs, Pittman, Hardie (Erskine, 71'), Lawless, Halkett, Gallagher, Wylde

(Lamie, 60'), Menga (Hamilton, 75').

**Referee:** Willie Collum

**Attendance:** 11,077

**Top man:** At last, it's Sean Clare.