Doyle error costs Hearts dear at Fir Park

Motherwell 2 Heart of Midlothian 1

Ladbrokes Premiership – Sunday 17th February 2019 – Fir Park

A mistake from Hearts goalkeeper Colin Doyle denied Hearts a share of the spoils at Fir Park on Sunday as Motherwell continued their good recent form of late. Doyle inexplicably let a weak free-kick from Turnbull squirm from his grasp in the final minute of the game meaning Craig Levein's men left Lanarkshire with nothing from a game in which they deserved at least a draw.

Levein made four changes to the team that eased past Auchinleck Talbot in the Scottish Cup seven days ago – Marcus Godinho, Conor Shaughnessy, Oliver Bozanic and Jake Mulraney came in for Michael Smith, Demetri Mitchell, Olly Lee and Steven MacLean.

Hearts made a decent start to the game and were denied a penalty in the early stages when Jake Mulraney was stopped in no uncertain terms by Campbell inside the Motherwell penalty box. However, referee Nick Walsh wasn't interested in Hearts penalty appeals.

The home side took the lead in the 13th minute when Hastie was allowed to run into the

Hearts
penalty box and fire a fine shot past Doyle.

Seven minutes before
half-time Hearts equalised. Sean Clare burst forward before sending Uche
Ikpeazu free. The big man crossed for Steven Naismith who eventually poked the
ball past the Well keeper to draw parity.

Clare then had a chance to
put the visitors in front, but his effort went wide.

The second half was an end-to-end
affair with both sides having chances to score. The best chance fell to Steven Naismith,
but the usually deadly front man ballooned his shot over the bar from around
three yards. Moments later John Souttar headed wide from similar close range as
groans emanated from the travelling Hearts support.

They were collectively holding
their hands in their heads when the roof fell in on Hearts in the final minute.
Ben Garuccio challenged Grimshaw just outside the Hearts penalty box. Referee
Walsh deemed it a dangerous challenge and immediately flashed a red card to the
Hearts man. But worse was to follow form the resultant free-kick.

Turnbull's free kick looked a
tame one and Hearts keeper Doyle looked set to collect easily. However, the
Irishman allowed the ball to bounce in front of him and he couldn't stop it
from going into the net for Motherwell's winner.

Doyle had had a decent game
up until that point but his howler meant Hearts would head
back to Gorgie with
nothing to show for their efforts.

Craig Levein couldn't quite believe
what he had just witnessed. He told the official Hearts
website:

*"25-30 years ago, you would get away with the challenge
Garuccio made no bother. All the players know that if you
leave the ground to tackle, which Ben did, it's trouble.
Although he's won the ball and the player wasn't injured, it's
just the nature of the game. It's not a surprise.*

*"I'm not criticising the referee at all because Ben did leave
the ground. I think everybody knows that that's not
acceptable. We've got to take it on the chin.*

As
for Colin Doyle's gaffe, the manager was philosophical.

*"It happens. Colin Doyle has made an error from a free-kick
that is fairly easily saved, so the emotions go from pretty
positive to 'how the hell did we get beat there?'"*

*You just hope that when your players make mistakes that they
don't result in you losing points. Unfortunately, we've lost
one and at that stage of the game I felt positive about us
winning the game, so it feels like we've gone from one extreme
to another.*

*"Colin's been doing okay, I don't have any complaints. We talk
about it because it happened. We've just got to deal with it,
pick ourselves up and go again next week."*

Motherwell: Gillespie, Grimshaw,
Aldred, Dunne, Tait, Turnbull, Campbell, Rodriguez (McHugh
68'), Ariyibi (Frear

64'), Hastie, Main (Scott 81').

Hearts: Doyle, Souttar, Shaughnessy (Garuccio 59'), Berra, Godinho, Djoum, Bozanic, Mulraney (Dikamona 91'), Clare (Keena 79'), Naismith, Ikpeazu.

Referee: Nick Walsh

Attendance: 5,091

Top man: Uche Ikpeazu