

Struggling Hearts stumble again

Heart of Midlothian 1 St Mirren 1

Ladbroke's Premiership – Saturday 23rd February 2019 –
Tynecastle
Park

Hearts

supporters endured another afternoon of torment at Tynecastle as bottom club St Mirren snatched a deserved share of the spoils in their Ladbroke's Premiership clash on Saturday afternoon.

It

was a performance sadly all-too familiar for the Maroon Army this season as Hearts huffed and puffed but rarely looked like blowing St Mirren away and the

boos from the home support at the end of the game told their own story.

Hearts

manager Craig Levein made four changes from the team that gifted victory to Motherwell last Sunday. There was an inevitably about goalkeeper Colin Doyle dropping to the substitute's bench following his faux pas at Fir Park. Bobby Zlamal replaced the Irishman between the sticks. Clevid Dikamona and Olly Lee came in for Conor Shaughnessy and Marcus Godinho while there was a welcome return for long-term injury victim Peter Haring who replaced Oliver Bozanic.

The Paisley Saints are fighting for Premiership survival and they camped themselves in the Hearts half in the opening couple of minutes. Tansey's effort on goal in those opening moments whizzed wide.

If

truth be told the rest of the first half was one to forget. Hearts seemed devoid of attacking ideas with the tactic appearing to be cross balls from John Souttar and runs down the left wing from Jake Mulraney who seemed to find it difficult to cross the ball in that first half in particular.

There

was one decent chance for the home side to open the scoring when Olly Lee's corner fell for Clevid Dikamona whose overhead kick was

blocked by Saints keeper Hladky. Christophe Berra followed up only for he, too, to be denied by the goalie before the Saints custodian denied Lee. With Hearts desperate to score, Hladky collided with Peter Haring as the Austrian tried to head home a cross.

Christophe Berra, of all people, was then guilty of slack play which allowed McAllister a clear run on goal, but the Saints man's shot on goal was wide, to the relief of the Hearts support and the club captain.

The home support were becoming restless, but their mood was lifted in the 55th minute. Olly Lee's corner found the head of Dikamona whose powerful header soared into the top right-hand corner of the net to put Hearts ahead. Relief all around Tynecastle – but it didn't last.

Midway through the second half St Mirren's McAllister delivered a corner into the Hearts penalty box. The unfortunate Sean Clare headed past his own goal keeper and parity was restored.

The returning Zlamal prevented an even worse scenario when he clawed away an attempted clearance by Dikamona.

And that, dear reader, was that. Hearts were, quite frankly,

woeful and appeared yet again to be utterly clueless in the final third of the field. Even the normally reliable Steven Naismith and Christophe Berra seemed out of sorts.

At what was, until recently, fortress Tynecastle, Hearts have now shed points to Livingston, Dundee and St Mirren. As a dismayed Hearts support will all too willingly tell you, this is far from good enough. One suspects the mood will darken even more on Wednesday evening when league champions Celtic visit Tynecastle although Hearts have defeated Brendan Rodgers' side twice in Gorgie in the last 15 months.



Craig Levein was, like the Hearts support, far from happy. He told the official Hearts website:

'The attitude seemed to be almost like 'well that's them back, we should be winning, without doing anything.' he said, referring to the return from injury of key players.

"That's not what happens. Everybody has to pull their weight,"

"All the injured players coming back, they can be the main players for us, but it requires everybody to do what they need to do. If you come into a game thinking we've got Peter or Uche back, we should win... it's not as simple as that."

"We didn't start the game particularly well today and brought pressure on ourselves. We didn't pass the ball quickly or accurately enough. St Mirren came to do what they came to do. They did the same against Aberdeen and they've done the same to us today so all credit to them."

Hearts: Zlamal, Souttar, Haring (Bozanic, 66'), Berra, Lee (MacLean, 66'), Clare, Djoum, Naismith, Ikpeazu, Mulraney, Dikamona (Morrison, 75')

St Mirren: Hladky, McGinn, Muzek, Flynn, Nazon (Jackson, 61'), Baird, Popescu, Tansey, McAllister (Dreyer, 77'), MacPherson, Erhahon.

Referee: Don Robertson

Attendance: 16,705

Top man: Clevid Dikamona