

Thistle sting Hearts to force cup replay

Partick Thistle 1 Heart of Midlothian 1

**William Hill Scottish Cup Quarter-Final, Monday 4th
March 2019 – Firhill**

It was Firhill for spills on Monday evening as Hearts turned a winning opportunity into a need for a second game in the quarter final of the William Hill Scottish Cup against Partick Thistle – a team presently bottom of the second tier of Scottish football. The Jambos were dealt a pre-match blow when talisman Steven Naismith failed to recover from the knee injury sustained against Celtic last Wednesday evening.

Hearts boss Craig Levein made three changes from the team that lost an injury time winner to Celtic. Steven MacLean replaced Naismith while Oliver Bozanic and Ben Garuccio replaced Olly Lee and Jamie Brandon.

Hearts made a decent enough start and were camped in the Thistle half for most of the first forty-five minutes. They went in front in the 12th minute when Ben Garuccio's free-kick found the head of Christophe Berra in the Thistle penalty box and the captain headed home to give the visitors the ideal start.

Hearts dominated the rest of the first half and should have added to their tally. Uche Ikpeazu displayed a brilliant piece of skill on the edge of the Thistle penalty box but his effort on goal was inches wide. The best chance, however, fell to Sean Clare right on half-time when fine link-up play from Hearts saw the Englishman in space in the Thistle penalty box – but his shot on goal was wide and not so mighty.

Thistle improved after the interval, but Hearts spurned another chance early in the second half when Clare's effort on goal was pushed on to the bar by the Thistle keeper only for Ikpeazu to head the rebound over the bar from four yards.

It was a chance Hearts were left to regret wasting when Thistle duly equalised with 18 minutes to go. On the counter-attack, Slater crossed for Elliott to drive the ball into the net to level the scores.

Despite dominating a game they should have won easily, Hearts will need a replay against Partick Thistle at Tynecastle on Tuesday 12th March.

If Craig Levein's mean overcome the Jags they will face another Thistle in the semi-final. Hearts or Partick Thistle were drawn against Inverness Caledonian Thistle – managed by Hearts legend John Robertson – in the last four.

Partick**Thistle:**

Hazard, Elliott, Penrice, Anderson, Spittal, Harkins, Slater, Fitzpatrick

(Cardle, 69'), Mansell, McMillan (Storey, 74'), Saunders.

Hearts: Zlamal, Souttar, Haring, Berra, Bozanic, Clare, Djoum, Garuccio, MacLean (Mulraney, 80'), Ikpeazu, Godinho.

Referee: Bobby Madden

Attendance: 5,171

Top Man: Uche Ikpeazu