

Hearts claim bonus point after penalty shoot-out win

Heart of Midlothian 1 Dundee United 1 (Hearts win 5-3 on penalties)

**Scottish League Cup – Group A – Friday 12th July 2019 –
Tynecastle Park**

**Forty-eight
days after their defeat from Celtic
in the Scottish Cup final at the
end of
last season, Hearts began season
2019/20 with a Scottish League Cup
Group A tie
against Dundee United.**

I'm
an advocate for summer football but those who argue against
this were wearing
smug grins as the heavens opened in Edinburgh on Friday
evening and incessant rain
made for testing conditions for players and supporters alike.



Photo: Ian Jacobs

Hearts

manager Craig Levein gave a debut to new striker Conor Washington and a starting place to Jamie Walker, the Gorgie prodigal son back from Wigan to where it all began.

Hearts

began on the front foot, but it was the visitors, managed by former Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson who shocked the home support by taking the lead in the 8th minute. Fine play by Stanton saw him dance through the Hearts defence before clipping the ball for United's new signing Shankland to stoop to head home.

Hearts

dominated the game thereafter but struggled to seriously threaten the United goal. Washington had a chance just inside the United penalty box but dragged his shot wide while Jamie Walker could have made it a dream second debut but wasted a great chance in front of goal.

However,

right on half-time Hearts got the equaliser their dominance deserved. Andy Irving, whose ineligible appearance for Hearts in last season's League Cup tie against Cove Rangers cost Hearts two points, drilled home a superb low shot from the edge of the United penalty area and the game was level.

The

second half took on the same story as the first with Hearts dominant but unable to score. In fact, it was United who scorned the best opportunity through Clark when Hearts keeper Bobby Zlamal tipped his shot wide. Clark's father, Sandy, would surely have buried such an effort when he wore the maroon of Hearts in the 1980s.

Hearts

goalscorer Andy Irving was sent off towards the end of the game for deliberate hand ball thereby denying United an obvious goalscoring opportunity. It seemed a harsh decision from referee Kevin Clancy and a disconsolate Irving left the field, probably wishing he could join his mates who he used to sit next to in

the Wheatfield Stand.



Photo: Ian Jacobs

The

game ended at 1-1 but the format of the League Cup sees the tie decided by a

penalty shoot-out. Hearts scored with all five penalty kicks – Sean Clare,

Michael Smith, Conor Washington, Oliver Bozanic and John Souttar doing the business

to claim a bonus point after Clark missed for United. The additional point enables

the Maroons to top Group A.

Hearts

next fixture in the League Cup is away at Cowdenbeath on Tuesday evening.

Hearts: Zlamal, M.

Smith, Souttar, Berra, Clare, Washington, Walker (McDonald, 80'), Mulraney (Zanatta, 75'), Ikpeazu (Bozanic, 84'), Irving, Hickey.

Dundee United: Siegrist, L. Smith, Sporle (Butcher, 46'), Connolly, Reynolds, McMullan, Clark, Stanton (Banks, 34'), Robson, Bouhenna, Shankland (Appere, 62').

Referee: Kevin Clancy

Attendance: 9,091

Top man: Aaron Hickey