

Hearts struggle for a pattern in Paisley as injury woes strike again

St. Mirren 0 Heart of Midlothian 0

Ladbrokes Premiership – Saturday 28th September 2019 – Simple Digital Arena

After wins over Hibernian in the league and Aberdeen in the Betfred Cup, Hearts performance in their goalless draw at St. Mirren on Saturday heralded a return to the levels that provoked protests from the supporters just a couple of weeks ago.

Hearts struggled to create clear chances and a draw was probably a fair result. But their never-ending injury problems were compounded midway through the first half when defender Craig Halkett – arguably Hearts best player this season – hobbled off with a knee injury. It was later diagnosed as a medial ligament injury meaning the former Livingston player will be out for several months. Halkett was captain in Paisley as Hearts manager Craig Levein opted to put Christophe Berra on the substitutes' bench but the curse of the captain's armband – Berra, John Souttar, Steven Naismith and now Halkett have all been injured whilst skippering

the team – struck again.

What real chances Hearts did create were few and far between. Steven MacLean had a chance after just five minutes but put his shot wide. Substitute Christophe Berra then forced a save from Saints keeper Hladky. The home side did have the ball in the net through Andreu but he was adjudged offside.

Hearts suffered another injury blow when Loic Damour was forced to leave the field shortly before half-time and while losing two players to injury before the first half was out undoubtedly unsettled the team it was disappointing that Hearts struggled to create anything of note in the second half other than another gilt-edged chance for MacLean which he contrived to miss when it seemed easier to score. A goalless draw against a struggling St. Mirren team is disappointing to say the least.

Levein

told the official Hearts website after the game:

“My biggest disappointment today is Craig Halkett’s knee injury. Last week was the first time that I didn’t need to take someone off before half time, so I thought we were over it, then this week its two players.”

“He was involved in a challenge and he’s opened the inside part, the medial ligament, of his knee, so he could be out for a while. He had the armband on today for what he’s done for the team.

“I feel so sorry for him as he was stepping up and becoming the player I thought he would be. I’m sick for him and that’s another of our best players on the sidelines for a few months.”

St

Mirren:

Hladky, P. McGinn, Waters, McLoughlin, Magennis, Flynn, Andreu

(Mullen, 60'),
Durmus (McAllister, 70'), Foley, Morias (Obika, 60'),
Broadfoot.

Hearts: Pereira, Smith, Mulraney,
Whelan, MacLean, Ikpeazu, Damour (Irving, 38'), Halkett
(Berra, 24'), Morrison,
Hickey, Meshino (White, 77').

Referee: Andrew Dallas

Att: 5,901

Top man: Michael Smith