

Flat Hearts crash to defeat at Dunfermline

Dunfermline 2-1 Hearts

Two goals early in the second half were enough to see Dunfermline defeat a lethargic Hearts side and head to the top of the Championship.

The Jambos were seeking their fourth straight league win in succession with Robbie Neilson taking his side over the Forth to face his former assistant manager Stevie Crawford at East End Park. He named an attacking line-up with Naismith, Boyce and Wighton all starting for Hearts, however his intentions did not materialise in a game that seemed to really pass a lot of his charges surprisingly by.

It perhaps raised a few eyebrows to see the likes of Gordon, Boyce and Smith start the game, having played roles in their respective nations' international campaigns over the last ten days. It was the aura of lethargy that seemed to permeate the Hearts side in what, arguably, was their biggest test to their league winning mettle so far this season.

The first half came and went without much ebb and flow. Hearts could probably try and claim upper hand with a number of long range efforts as well as a Popsecu header off the crossbar when he should have converted. However, the Pars were always very much in the game in a relatively even contest in the first 45.

Soon after the restart Hearts found themselves behind for the first time this season when Dom Thomas fired in a heavily deflected shot past Gordon. The lead was doubled five minutes later when Euan Murray ghosted in to the six yard box from a corner to nod home unmarked.

Hearts suddenly kicked out of their stupor and started to look a touch more menacing. On 60 minutes, Liam Boyce failed to score despite a free header from a few yards out – continuing his early season impotence which is starting to become a topic of debate amongst the Hearts' support. A minute later, Popescu again hit the bar from a cross when once more it perhaps looked easier to score.

Up the other end, Dunfermline continued to threaten as Hearts pushed men forward however, thankfully for the Gorgie outfit, the home side were wasteful in front of goal.

It was a disappointing score for Hearts, especially given the response by Neilson's team to the big games so far this season. With a shortened Championship season this term, the Jambos will need to pull their socks up swiftly ahead of Alloa's visit to Gorgie on Tuesday.

Dunfermline: Fon Williams, Mayo, Watson, Murray, Edwards, Whittaker, Dow, Turner, McInroy Thomas (Murray), McManus (O'Hara)

Hearts: Gordon, Smith, Halkett, Popescu, Kingsley, Lee (Irving), Halliday, Wighton (Roberts), Naismith, Frear (Walker), Boyce

Referee: Don Robertson