

Hearts plod to draw at Inverness

Inverness Caledonian Thistle 1-1 Hearts

League leaders Hearts could only muster another draw under the lights and BBC cameras away up at Inverness.

Gaffer Robbie Neilson named an unchanged side for the first time in his tenure with the same starting XI taking to the field after [Saturday's uninspiring 1-1 draw at home to Morton](#). Former Jambo and cup winning legend Neil McCann was in the opposing dugout, taking charge of the Highland side on an interim basis whilst fellow Hearts legend John Robertson takes a break on compassionate leave.

Also of note was the 10,000 virtual attendance with a record breaking number of Hearts fans snapping up briefs to support Inverness in response for their respective backing when Hearts entered administration in 2013.

Whilst the feelgood factor was strong off the pitch from the demonstration of the power of the football family, the visitors soon found themselves a goal down when an uncharacteristically timid defensive manoeuvre from Michael Smith saw Miles Storey ghost in to prod past Craig Gordon. Smith also limped off late in the game which is a big worry for JTs given his typical level of performance and the Jambos' lack of cover in the right back role.

Many of the men in maroon were worryingly pretty flat again with only Gary Mackay-Steven's display causing note with some glimpses that there is genuinely more to come from the, so far, underwhelming January recruit.

Hearts did get back level before the break when the isolated Liam Boyce was sharp enough to respond to a knock down in the six yard box and made no mistake past Mark Ridgers.

The Jambos did turn the screw in the second half with substitutes Jamie Walker and Armand Gnanduillet going close as well as Boyce nudging a late effort off the post but the winner proved out of reach.

It's now three 1-1 draws on the bounce for Neilson's men and whilst they sit 12 points clear – albeit with second-placed Dunfermline having a couple of games in hand – it's the manner of the performances and spirit in the players that's the cause of concern for those of a maroon persuasion.

Inverness CT interim manager Neil McCann: "I'm proud, I must admit. I'm delighted with the boys. We've only had one-and-a-half sessions. They gave me everything.

"They were brilliant and limited Hearts to very little. We'd like to polish up our football, but I can't have any complaints."

Hearts head coach Robbie Neilson: "We're disappointed, that's three draws on the bounce. People have got to realise it's very difficult to play in the Championship. You have to earn the right to play.

"To be sitting 12 points clear is a fantastic achievement for the players. We have no given right to turn up and win football matches. We've got to take the positives from that."

Inverness Caledonian Thistle: Ridgers, Duffy, Devine, Deas, Harper, Welsh, Carson (Allardice, 66 mins), Storey, Keatings

(Todorov, 78 mins), MacGregor (MacKay, 57 mins), Sutherland
Subs not used: McKay, Nicolson, Hyde

Hearts: Gordon, Smith (Irving, 80 mins), Popescu, Halkett,
Kingsley, Halliday, McEneff, Kastaneer (Gnanduillet, 45 mins),
Naismith (Walker, 62 mins), Mackay-Steven, Boyce Subs not used:
Haring, Berra, Stewart, Henderson

Referee: Nick Walsh