

Industrious Hearts march on

Ayr United 0-1 Hearts

A professional display by Championship leaders Hearts let them take all three points against Ayr United and the Jambos stretched their lead to 12 points ahead of the other weekend's fixtures.

Liam Boyce's second half penalty was enough to give Hearts the victory in a game they controlled throughout, despite the wet and windy conditions on Scotland's west coast.

After an attritional first half, when perhaps the visitors should have been awarded a penalty after it appeared Boyce was tripped in the box, Hearts boss Robbie Neilson rallied his charges at the break and watched them deliver a controlled second 45 minutes with all the hallmarks of league leaders managing out a Championship title.

It's the JTs third clean sheet in a row and their second 1-0 win on the spin as the Tynecastle side switch to grinding out wins rather than their more erratic and pacey performances earlier this campaign. The only goal of the game came after 48 minutes when Ayr captain Jack Baird was adjudged to have handled in the box despite the ball ricocheting off his thigh onto his arm – appearing to contravene with new regulations ruling out a foul for such secondary connections.



Scottish Championship – Heart of Midlothian v Dunfermline.

Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.

23/01/2021

Hearts play host to Dunfermline in the Scottish Championship at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh.

Pic shows: Hearts' new signing, French striker, Armand Gnanouillet,

Credit: Ian Jacobs

New striker Armand Gnanouillet started the game but struggled to find much rhythm in the Ayrshire rain, whilst deadline day recruits Aaron McEneff and Gervane Kastaneer made strong second half appearances – with McEneff looking particularly composed in central midfield. Jamie Walker was the stand out in maroon and will be hoping this 90 minutes and his stellar goal-scoring contribution last weekend are the sure signs he's finally coming good as a reliable attacker in Neilson's side.

Hearts will watch tomorrow's Championship card in comfort with three points already in the bag. Next up is another BBC televised clash next Friday evening when they take on Queen of the South at Palmerston Park.

Ayr United: Sinisalo, Miller (McKenzie, 85 mins), Muirhead, Baird, Ndaba, Chalmers (McGavin, 79 mins), Murdoch, Walsh (Moffat, 74 mins), Smith, McCowan, Wright Subs: Reading, Roscoe-Byrne, , Zanatta, Hare-Reid

Hearts: Gordon, Smith, Popescu, Halkett, Kingsley, Halliday, Irving Naismith, 78 mins), Walker, Mackay-Steven (Kastaneer, 66 mins), Gnanouillet (McEneff, 66 mins), Boyce Subs: White, Haring, Berra, Stewart

Referee: Steven McLean