

Drab Hearts draw a blank at Arbroath

Arbroath 0-0 Hearts

League leaders Hearts played out a dull 0-0 away at Arbroath in yet another display that will inspire little confidence ahead of next season's anticipated return to the Premiership.

Robbie Neilson uncharacteristically named an unchanged side for the third successive game – again leaving Jamie Walker out of the starting XI despite his impactful appearances off the bench in recent games.

The contest had short moments of quality in a concerning performance by Neilson's men given the part-time nature of the opposition, who also currently languish second from bottom in the Championship. In what is fast becoming the tale of the season, Hearts oddly find themselves further ahead at the top of the table after closest rivals Dunfermline suffered a 0-1 reverse at home to Inverness Caledonian Thistle. Further, only Ayr in the Championship have failed to take points off the Jambos this season.

The chances that fell to Hearts were few and far between and typically resembled scrambles in the box which, considering the perceived calibre in the JT ranks, as well as the budget available, is particularly galling.

Next up for Hearts is a Scottish cup clash away at Highland League outfit Brora Rangers on Tuesday evening. Could the Scottish Cup provide some salvation for a Hearts season, which despite likely league winning credentials, is quickly petering into an uninspiring slog?

Arbroath: Gaston, Pignatiello, Little, O'Brien, Hamilton, Linn (Hilson, 73 mins), Gold (Stewart, 77 mins), Williamson, Craigen, Doolan (McKenna, 45 mins), Hamilton Subs not used: Whatley, Gallacher

Hearts: Gordon, Smith, Popescu, Halkett, Kingsley (Walker, 76 mins), McEneff (White, 46 mins), Irving, Halliday, Mackay-Steven (Kastaneer, 69 mins) Boyce, Gnaudillet Subs not used: Berra, Stewart, Frear, Henderson

Referee: Euan Anderson