

Hearts blow Alloa away as title beckons

Hearts 6-0 Alloa Athletic

Hearts sit on the cusp of being crowned Championship winners today after routing bottom club Alloa under the Friday night lights at Tynecastle.



Scottish Championship – Heart of Midlothian v Alloa Athletic.
Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.

23/01/2021

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

Pic shows: Hearts run out 6-0 winners after a fine performance over a demoralised Alloa side who are now staring relegation in the face.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

Goals from Euan Henderson, Aaron McEneff and Jamie Walker added to man-of-the-match Liam Boyce's impressive hattrick to wrap up a fine display from Robbie Neilson's men with three games to go in the league campaign.

Amidst some weeks of supporter unrest following a series of dull performances and dire results, Neilson made some system changes by altering to a 3-5-2 formation which saw, most notably, Peter Haring and Aaron McEneff dispatched in their preferred central roles. The result was a Hearts performance of real pace and stability with the central anchoring allowing the likes of Henderson, Shay Logan and Andy Halliday to get forward to create multiple chances and consistent pressure for the home side.

John Souttar also made his long return to team – his first game since rupturing his Achilles for a second time in January

2020 – taking his place in a back three which he marshalled with real capability and presence. Could he muster a late charge for a berth in Steve Clarke’s Scotland Euros squad?

The hammering of Peter Grant’s Wasps means the Jambos will bounce straight back to the Premiership if Raith Rovers and Dundee both fail to win their home clashes today against Arbroath and Morton respectively.

Whilst it took a jittery 20 minutes for the newly structured XI to find their feet, the JTs were a goal to the good on 26 minutes when Boyce expertly smashed in a smart Halliday through ball. His second came from the penalty spot – after Henderson was felled following a gutsy 60-yard run.

Henderson grabbed the goal his performance and attitude merited, bashing in Peter Haring’s defence-splitting ball. Boyce landed his third, and 16th of the season, when he blasted home the fourth after only 53 minutes.

McEneff opened his Gorgie goal account, deftly finishing into the bottom corner. Regular impact substitute Jamie Walker notched the sixth as the clock ticked to 90 minutes.

It was a scoreline and performance much needed by Hearts and Neilson given the past few weeks. The new formation and application by certain players has certainly gone some way to appease supporters – albeit against a part-time side sitting bottom of the league. If the Jambos can establish more swagger and verve as the season edges out, there could be light at the end of the tunnel for the return to the Premiership.

Hearts manager Robbie Neilson: “We’ve taken a bit of flak, so it’s good to get back to winning ways. There’ll be a few pundits that aren’t happy tonight so it’s good to ram it down their throat.

“Internally we know what we’ve got here. I’m delighted to see John Souttar back. He did great. All in all, it was a great

team performance.”

Alloa manager Peter Grant: “We played a lot of good stuff but, yet again, you see the goals we lose are very poor. It’s a sore one.”





