

Robbie Neilson praises new signings

Hearts defeated Livingston in the top-flight for the first time since 2006 with goals from Michael Smith, Liam Boyce and Alex Cochrane.

Hearts showed energy to win the ball back and were composed when in possession in a completely dominant display against Livingston.

Michael Smith opened the scoring with a strike from outside the box, Liam Boyce's penalty doubled Hearts' lead before half-time and Alex Cochrane got his first goal for the club to put the icing on the cake for the Jambos.

"I was really pleased with the way we played," said Hearts boss Robbie Neilson.

"We've been like that in the majority of games we've played this season. Today was a day that the majority of things we've been working on came to fruition."

It was another afternoon in which the recruitment at Hearts came to the fore with Cameron Devlin, Barrie McKay and Taylor Moore all impressing and Robbie Neilson highlighted the depth his squad now has, particularly in attack.

"Barrie's performance was the reason we brought him here. We've got Barrie, Mackay Steven, Woodburn, Walker and Ginnelly, so that keeps everyone fresh and ready to go. He did well.

“The recruitment’s been really good this year. Hearts in the Premiership you’re far more appealing than when you’re Hearts in the Championship. We’ve managed to recruit the right players, the right types of players. It’s nice to be where we are but we’re only seven games in and how we respond to the lows will be the next question.

“Ginnelly and John Souttar didn’t make the squad today because they have niggles, and every single one of our 20-man squad could play in the team. If you’d asked me a couple of months ago we’d be sitting with 12-13 players and if we’d got a couple of injuries we’d have been struggling. We’ve got competition.

Hearts played with real intensity, especially when out of possession and at the heart of that was Australian midfielder, Cameron Devlin, who is already shaping up to be a fans favourite and his manager admitted he’s just another piece added to the Hearts jigsaw.

“When I came in at the start of last season we’d the oldest squad in the Championship and the plan was to get the squad a lot younger and more energetic, more mobile. Cammy’s another piece in the jigsaw, he’s 23, he’s got energy, pace, mobility and he can deal with the ball. I’ve been pleased with the ones that came in.

“Livingston have had tough games – Sunday Wednesday Saturday, against Celtic, Rangers and Hearts. So, we knew it would be important to bring energy that would allow us to dominate the game. I think we’ve a decent squad here now. All in all, it’s been a good day.”

Hearts remain at Tynecastle next weekend as they welcome Motherwell, who will arrive with an impressive unbeaten record in their last six league games and Neilson admitted it’s a ‘massive’ game for his side.

“Next week’s going to massive for us. Motherwell got another

three points today; they've had a brilliant start to the season, and they'll fancy their chances coming to Tynecastle. But these are the games we want to be involved in."

Josh Ginnelly was rested due to a minor ankle problem, John Souttar wasn't risked after picking up a knock during Thursday's training and Craig Halkett was substituted late on after a head knock, but Neilson highlighted there is no cause for concern.

"Souttar could've made it today, but he might have aggravated it, he'll be fine for next week. Halkett just got a wee head knock, he was a bit wheezy, so we took him off.