

# **Hearts midfielder ruled out of Parkhead trip**

**Hearts travel to Parkhead on Thursday night, a venue the Jambos struggle to perform at as it is, considering their last victory in the East End of Glasgow was back in 2009, never mind the fact they will be without Beni Baniyime in the heart of their team for this trip.**

The combative midfielder was stretchered off in the final minutes of Saturday's victory over St Mirren, and despite manager Robbie Neilson explaining afterwards that the injury wasn't as bad as first feared, he has now revealed the midfielder will be absent for Thursday night's match against The Hoops.

"He'll not make the game on Thursday," Neilson said.

"He's getting scanned today and we'll see how it goes. It's just a precaution, really. We knew after he took the knock he wouldn't make Thursday's game. He'll maybe make Sunday, I would hope, but if he doesn't he'll definitely be ready for the Rangers game.

"Initially everybody is worried about him but then you assess it the next day and it's not too bad. Then you need to get the scan and see what's on that. He actually feels not too bad about it."

“With the three games in a week, given the squad we’ve got, we were looking at freshening up a couple of areas here and there. It’s just one of those things but, touch wood, I don’t expect it to be a long-term thing for Beni.”

Hearts have already met Celtic twice this season. After getting the better of them at Tynecastle on the opening day of the season, Hearts were beaten at Parkhead in the Premier Sports Cup.

Celtic have been a difficult proposition to predict under new manager Ange Postecoglou, St Mirren and Dundee have been on the end of hammerings, whereas Livingston and Dundee United have left Parkhead with a point.

The hardy band of Hearts fans making the journey west on Thursday night have reasons to be optimistic, considering their side has already scored four goals against Celtic this season and Neilson insisted Hearts aren’t going there to just defend for 90 minutes.

“There are ways you can go there and play,” he said.

“Some teams will go and have a go; some will sit in and hope for the best. We want to be a team that has a go. I always have the believe that you need to go to these places to try and win it, or you can sit there and get beat, because they will always get their good players into good areas.

“They’ve got good players and just about every one of them is an international player, so you have to go there with confidence but also with that respect to them. They are a good team, and we have to set up properly, but we believe we have good players in our team as well.

“Second place is up for grabs. If we get the result, we go ahead of them and that’s how we are looking at it. The players have belief. They are a good group and throughout the season, even if there has been a difficult game, they have responded

the following week, just as they did last week. I'm looking forward to going to Parkhead and putting on a performance."

The Scottish Cup draw was made on Monday night and Hearts have been handed a trip to face junior side Auchinleck Talbot. Hearts have faced the Ayrshire side in the early rounds of the competition previously and after getting the better of Talbot on both occasions, Hearts went on to reach the final, beating rivals Hibernian in 2012 and losing to Celtic in 2020.

"I didn't watch it, but I got a text and it's a good one for us. There will be a good atmosphere. Sometimes you get these draws, you go to places and there's nobody there but I'm sure Auchinleck will be pretty lively that Saturday."

Stephen Kingsley grabbed his fourth goal of the season last weekend and with his contract running out in the summer, Neilson revealed a new deal has been put to the defender.

"We've put an offer to him. Joe Savage is dealing with that and it's coming back and forward as it always does. Hopefully we can get Stephen tied up because he has been one of our better players this season, and probably last season as well in terms of consistency."



cinch Premiership – Heart of Midlothian v Aberdeen  
22/8/2021.

Hearts play host to Aberdeen in the cinch Premiership at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian.

Pic shows: Honours even in a close fought encounter as the match finishes 1-1.

Credit: Ian Jacobs