

Hearts move second after early game of the season contender

With goals from Alex Cochrane, Stephen Kingsley, Aaron McEneff and a brace from Ben Woodburn Hearts ended their four-game run without victory in style in front of their boisterous home support.

Hearts were without their Northern Irish pairing of Michael Smith and Liam Boyce, both of whom missed out through injury, and Dylan Levitt was missing for the visitors.

The Jambos stuck with their wing-back system with Taylor Moore replacing Smith while Declan Glass slotted into United's midfield.

With the Scotland squad announced earlier in the week Craig Gordon is once again expected to be the number one for the upcoming World Cup Qualifiers.

Dundee United were foiled by another goalkeeper in Steve Clarke's squad last weekend, St Johnstone stopper Zander Clark was influential in the Saints victory at Tannadice, and it must have felt like déjà vu for the Arabs when Gordon brilliantly saved Declan Glass's deflected effort after just nine minutes.

Although these two sides were coming into the game off the back of defeats last weekend, they were both enjoying

impressive starts to their seasons. So, it came as no surprise to see Hearts break straight up the other end with Ben Woodburn calling Benji Siegrist into action for the first time.

With no Liam Boyce in the squad and Armand Gnanouillet left on the bench, it was up to Hearts' front three of Josh Ginnelly, Barrie McKay and Ben Woodburn to supply the attacking threat, with the latter two still waiting on their first goals in maroon. One of them wasn't waiting for much longer though.

Ben Woodburn received the ball on the right-hand side of the box and his low effort seemed to go through Siegrist and into the back of the net to put the hosts in front after 21 minutes.

Just three minutes later Hearts doubled their advantage. After some good defending initially from United, the ball fell to Josh Ginnelly, who instead of drilling the ball low, floated a cross to the back post for the onrushing Alex Cochrane. His volley was past Siegrist in a flash and gave the wing back his second Tynecastle goal and his sides second of the afternoon.

In a fairly even game, United found themselves two goals behind and they needed a bit of luck or a moment of magic, it appeared to be the latter when Ryan Edwards let fly from distance. Craig Gordon appeared to be unsighted or just caught cold as the defender grabbed his third goal in five games to get United back in this end-to-end game.

If Siegrist was at fault for the game's opening goal, he made amends four minutes before the break when denying Barrie McKay. Hearts then had a penalty shout waved away by referee John Beaton before Cammy Devlin was denied by Siegrist in stoppage time.

United were dealt a half time blow with Charlie Mulgrew unable to continue, he was replaced by Kerr Smith.

Josh Ginnelly scored his first league goal of the season at McDiarmid Park with his weaker left foot and almost caught Siegrist out at his near post. From the resulting corner the ball fell to Woodburn on the edge of the box and the Welshman guided the ball perfectly into the top corner to grab his second and restore Hearts' two goal cushion.

Hearts were well on top in the opening period of the second half, but again the deficit was halved when United broke up field and Nicky Clark headed home after being picked out by Kieran Freeman.

Siegrist again foiled Hearts, this time denying Ginnelly after Baningime had robbed Fuchs on the edge of the Hearts box, as this frantic game entered the final twenty minutes, the result hung in the balance.

Many Jambos had seen this movie before though. Numerous chances were missed when Dundee snatched a point from Tynecastle a fortnight ago and the home fans were keen not to see the other half of Dundee follow suit.

They needn't have worried though. The two-goal lead was once again restored when Cochrane's freekick to the back post was met by Stephen Kingsley who came charging in to make the points Hearts' to throw away.

The icing was put on the cake after 86 minutes when Aaron McEneff (remember him?) marked a rare appearance with a goal, remaining calm to lob Siegrist after being played clean through on goal by Gary Mackay-Steven.

John Beaton's whistle brought an end to a clear contender for game of the season and although there was a total of seven goals, there could easily have been more.