

Neilson on key to Hearts' success

Hearts moved up to second in the cinch Premiership after defeating Dundee United 5-2 in a game of the season contender at Tynecastle at the weekend.

After the disappointing display at Pittodrie last weekend and with an international break to follow, this game felt like a big one for the Jambos.

The victory snapped four games without a win in fine style and Neilson was delighted with the way his side bounced back from last weekend's first league defeat of the season but questioned the manner of the goals his team conceded.

"I was pleased," the Hearts' boss admitted. "I thought in parts of the game we played really, really well after the disappointment of last week, especially the second half, to come back and have that belief.

"We played well but I was disappointed to lose two goals. They weren't great goals. The first was a deflection and the second we opened up a bit too much because we were chasing the next goal."

The game was a topsy turvy affair, in which Hearts twice gave up a two-goal cushion and as a defender himself, Neilson couldn't have been blamed for attempting to baton down the hatches and protect his sides one goal advantage, instead Hearts continued to attack, a move which proved dividends.

“We have good players here,” Neilson said. During the game, especially when they got back to a goal behind at 2-1 and then 3-2 you do think should we change things and go more defensive, but we felt that the quality we’ve got on the pitch we can always create chance and we got the goals that take us clear.

“For us the key this season is going to be consistency. Can we do it every week because if we can there’s no doubt when we get to the end of the season we will be in a very good position. Last week, at Aberdeen they didn’t allow us to play the way we wanted to, and we struggled. It’s figuring out ways to stay in the game, ways to produce that performance when it’s not going for us.”



Scottish Championship – Heart of Midlothian v Dundee.

Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.

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

Pic shows: Hearts’ manager, Robbie Neilson, not happy as Hearts’ Irish International, Liam Boyce, writhes in agony.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

Without Liam Boyce leading the line, Hearts fans couldn’t be blamed for not expecting their side to score five goals against a United defence that have been stubborn so far this season.

“People were wondering what we would be like and what we would do,” Neilson said.

“Do we go with Armand for his physicality, or do we go with Ginnelly with his pace? We felt that playing against Mulgrew and Edwards who are strong physically and organised, that pace would help and thankfully it did.”

Ben Woodburn grabbed his first two goals in maroon, the second in particular was a thing of beauty and his boss believes the

weight has now been lifted from the Welshman's shoulders and Hearts fans will now see an even better player.

"I am delighted for Ben. He is a top player," said Neilson.

"We see that every day in training and it will be a release to get that goal. He has been putting a lot of pressure on himself to score goals and to come up here and do well and I just think the goals were the final thing he needed to release him. I thought that after the first goal he flourished so we will see even more from him.

"There is no doubt that he is a top player and when it falls in the box like that he is one of the few in the team that you would expect to score it."

The Hearts boss joked that Liam Boyce might even struggle to get back in the Hearts side. He said: "Yeah, I had hoped he would be back for this one but I'm not sure if he will get back in now! We will have to wait and see."

Aaron McEneff rounded off the scoring with a rare outing and Neilson was full of praise for the effort he's put in, despite not getting the amount of game-time he'd have liked.

"He came last January when we were going for the title and this season the level of player in that area shot up and Aaron is fighting to get in there. He trains well every day and I said to him, 'when it comes you have to be ready' and he's managed to get on score the goal because he does that hard work. Absolutely delighted for him."