

Missed opportunities as Hearts fall to Rangers at Tynecastle

When playing against one of the Glasgow big two teams have to take their chances if they are to have any chance of gaining three points – a fact Hearts top goalscorer Liam Boyce knows well.

Rangers left Tynecastle with all three points at the weekend with two quickfire goals from Alfredo Morelos and Joe Aribo although the Jambos enjoyed more possession and more shots both on and off goal.

Liam Boyce was the difference on the previous Sunday as Hearts defeated Livingston, but the Northern Irishman couldn't beat an inspired Allan McGregor and was afterwards visibly frustrated at his own performance.

“A couple of them were good saves but I still expect myself to do better,” he said.

“The chip was on my left, so I didn't want to put it over, I gave him a chance, basically. Then I had a couple of other snapshots and then the one on my left, I don't know if it hit someone's hand, but I should still score, it shouldn't even be a question.

“I thought we were excellent for most of the match, and basically if I take half of my chances we don't get beaten. As

soon as you go home and see your family it's gone. But that's the hardest one I have had to take in a while, probably ever.

"Rangers are a top quality team, and you don't expect that many chances. So, when you do get them you have to take them, so it's probably a bit harder to take because it happened in a game of that size."

Hearts had started the better of the two sides with Boyce and Devlin both going close, before Rangers scored two goals in four first half minutes.

To the home side's credit, they didn't let the Rangers goals unsettle them. Hearts continued to play with purpose and create chances, but Rangers were resolute at the back and dangerous on the break.

"I thought we were brilliant," Boyce added.

"It was two long balls that got them up the pitch, we end up defending and Craig makes the save but when we are chasing back we are out of position.

"Most of the game they were dropping Glen Kamara into centre back to give them a bit more protection, but we were passing it and making clear cut chances.

"It's probably the best we have played on the ball and in terms of making chances, it's just we didn't take them. I'll take most of the blame because I am here to score goals and that's what I have been doing, but today just wasn't my day."

"I've said that to the boys because I know I can help the team. There will be games where you score three and win 4-0 and it's easy, but when it's a game like that you need to take your chances. When everyone else is playing so well and working so hard to make those chances that's when they mean more, and you need to put them in the net."

Referee Nick Walsh had a busy afternoon in the middle, he

waved away a Hearts penalty claim in the second half and eventually brandished a yellow card in the direction of Rangers goalkeeper Allan McGregor for persistent timewasting. That in itself tells you how the match was going.

When asked about the potential penalty claim, Boyce replied: "I don't know. I saw it hit his hand and bounce up, but obviously I was just thinking it. Obviously after it you're going to claim for it. I don't know if it hit his hand or not, but I missed a chance, so I had to claim for it to try dig me out of a hole."

On the timewasting antics, he explained: "I was saying to the ref, it took him about 60 minutes before he stopped and spoke to him but didn't book him. I said to him in the first half if you blow the whistle in the first half, tell him not to do it anymore then it would speed the whole game up, but obviously it's not me in control and it's not my decision.

"I was surprised when he said, 'no more' instead of booking him and then it wouldn't have happened again, it's the same with throw-ins, if you book one person then nobody else it's going to do it, because they know the referee is on it but it's just the way it goes, it happens sometimes, it's frustrating but that's just the way football is."