

Resolute Rangers end Hearts' unbeaten home run

With first half goals from Alfredo Morelos and Joe Aribo Rangers went home victorious from Tynecastle for the first time since 2019.

Rangers arrived at Tynecastle fresh off the back of a 1-1 draw against Lyon in the Europa League. New manager Giovanni van Bronckhorst made six changes from the match in France, reverting back to a more common Rangers XI.

As for Hearts, Michael Smith didn't make the matchday squad, so Taylor Moore filled in at right-back in a side which appeared to be shaping up in an attacking 4-2-3-1 formation.

Hearts wore the number 26 during the warm-up in memory of former captain Marius Zaliukas, meanwhile Rangers did the same with the number 2 in memory of Fernando Ricksen, in order to raise awareness of Motor Neurone Disease, which both sadly lost their lives to.

A sold out Tynecastle was rocking and an early challenge from Josh Ginnelly on Borna Barisic showed that the Hearts players were also raring to go.

On a sporting Sunday where the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix topped the bill, Hearts were looking for a fast start of their own and the hosts almost got it when Souttar's long pass over the Rangers defence found Boyce. The striker attempted to lob McGregor, who's fingertip save just saw the ball clear his crossbar.

The Champions were rocking early doors and Devlin was next to go close when Ginnelly's pass found the Australian, but his goal-bound shot was deflected behind.

As is so often the case when you play the Old Firm, you have to take your chances when they come to you, Hearts didn't and were punished after 11 minutes. Ryan Kent found Fashion Sakala and that was 0-1.

Blink and you'd miss it, but three minutes later Rangers doubled their advantage. Goldson's pass was perfect for Aribo, taking John Souttar out the equation in the process. The touch and finish from the Nigerian were magnificent and somehow Hearts found themselves two down after 14 minutes.

There was still plenty of time remaining for Hearts to get themselves back in the game, but the concern Robbie Neilson had was not to do with his sides ability to score, especially when his side were on top in a very open contest, but the fact that Rangers have looked much more defensively solid under van Bronckhorst.

Hearts huffed and puffed, continuing to create and enjoy the majority of the ball, but the Rangers defence was organised enough to ensure they held their two-goal advantage till the interval.

Somehow, McGregor's clean sheet remained intact just minutes into the second half. Ginnelly's low cross from the right took a deflection off Basse, came back off the underside of the bar, evading Boyce, who was waiting for a tap in and was cleared to safety.

Craig Gordon had had busier afternoons in a Hearts shirt, but the skipper was alert to deny Arfield, Sakala and then Morelos on the hour mark, as Rangers went in search of a killer third.

Boyce should've halved the deficit after being picked out by

Mackay-Steven, but the striker was off balance and fired over.

The chances kept coming for Hearts and it was no surprise to see Stephen Kingsley standing over the dead ball 25-yards from goal, the only surprise was the ball didn't find the back of the net. McGregor was beaten, as the ball cannoned back off the bar.

As the game entered the 15 minutes it would be interesting to hear what was more surprising to the Hearts fans inside Tynecastle. The fact their side still hadn't found the net or that it had taken referee Nick Walsh 75 minutes to brandish a yellow card in the direction of Allan McGregor for persistent timewasting.

Walsh continued to be the centre of attention. This time it was Ginnelly who was shown a second yellow after an off the ball incident with ten minutes to go to compound the home side's misery.

McGregor denied Woodburn and Boyce late on, but Rangers kept Hearts at bay and became the first side to leave Tynecastle with three points this season.

The performance of champions you might say.