

Hearts – Neilson calls for a reaction after Ibrox drubbing

After conceding four goals in twenty second half minutes at Ibrox on Sunday, once again the pressure is back on Robbie Neilson and his players to respond to a bad result in what is a crucial four days.

The Hearts boss had previously talked about wanting to go to Glasgow and not just compete, but leave Glasgow with all three points, however on Sunday they were beaten 5-0 by a Rangers team out to avenge their Old Firm hammering.

The Jambos sit ten points clear in third spot, which for a newly promoted team is very impressive, however with rivals Hibernian and Aberdeen struggling, perhaps Hearts have had an easy ride to third spot, considering they've yet to beat either side so far this season.

Hearts were without Craig Halkett, Michael Smith and John Souttar for the trip to Govan and the goals Hearts gave up highlighted how sorely they were missed.



Scottish Championship – Heart of Midlothian v Arbroath.
Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.
29/12/2020.

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

Pic shows: Hearts' Canadian Right-Back, Craig Halkett, weighs up his options during the second half.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

Taylor Moore struggled in various forms, whereas Toby Sibbick's legs gave up on him towards the end, (understandably given his recent lack of game time), whereas Nathaniel Atkinson still looked very raw having only made his debut last month.

This week is the perfect opportunity for Hearts to get back on track though, first they host bottom side Dundee, before welcoming Livingston in the last 16 of the Scottish Cup.

Neilson was keen to try focus on the positives following Sunday's setback.

"Yes, we're disappointed with the result, but we don't want to get too despondent because of how well the players have done this season," he said.

"I thought there was a 20-minute period where we fell apart, which was the biggest disappointment. We lost four goals in 20 minutes and prior to that we had a number of chances that if we take them and probably should then it's a different outcome.

"You can't get too up or down, the team have done very well, we're sitting in third position, and we need to try and cement that position then get a good cup run. The next two games are very important to that.

"You saw the reaction after we got beat by Rangers, we're expected to win every single game. We play Dundee and the pressure is on us to win it. If we can do that then the pressure is to beat Livingston on Saturday. I don't think when you play with Hearts you are ever in a comfort zone."

After poor results last year in the Championship and so far this season, Hearts have normally bounced back immediately, and Neilson echoed his previous sentiments that losing is part and parcel of football, it's about how you respond to defeat.

"It's football, you're going to lose football matches, it's about how you react to it. Parts of the performance we were very disappointed in, but we have to move on.

"We've had a great season so far and had one bad performance, prior to that we played pretty well in the previous weeks, and we have to get back on it again.

"We shouldn't be going there [Ibrox] and losing that many goals. Sometimes you have to take that into consideration. it was a bad performance, but we need to move on to the next one."



Honours even as a frantic Edinburgh derby finished 0-0. Both sides had their chances over the 90 minutes but a share of the points probably a fair result in the end.

Credit: Ian Jacobs