

Atkinson volley secures comeback point for Jambos

Nathaniel Atkinson was Hearts' hero as he fired a left-foot volley into the net, giving Kilmarnock goalkeeper Zach Hemming no chance, in the 94th minute as the battling Jambos fought back from 2-0 down to take a share of the points at Rugby Park.

The 23-year-old Australian-born defender struck from around 20 yards after a free-kick had been cleared and he gave the Kilmarnock goalkeeper no chance as the ball flew into the net.

Earlier, former Scottish international Robert Snodgrass threaded an inch-perfect pass to on-loan forward Stephen Humphrys to slide the ball into the net, the 25-year-old from Oldham rounding the Kilmarnock goalkeeper to provide the travelling Hearts fans with something to celebrate. Time: 62 minutes.

The goal just after the hour mark also provided the Jambos with a lifeline and the Tynecastle men took it to earn a valuable point in the Ayrshire rain.

Manager Robbie Neilson (pictured) and his squad were seeking a lift ahead of their trip to Italy to face Fiorentina on Thursday in the UEFA Europa Conference League following last Thursday's 3-0 reverse at the Gorgie ground, and the boys in

maroon at least went home with something for their effort.

Earlier, goals from Killie defender Chris Stokes, who netted with Hearts' goalkeeper Craig Gordon complaining, possibly about being held, netted from close range following a corner after 47 minutes and another from ex-Hearts strike Kyle Lafferty, who latched on to a slip by the Scottish international stopper, put the Ayrshire side 2-0 ahead after 59 minutes.

Hearts started this game brightly, creating a number of chances which they failed to convert with Barry McKay sending the ball over the bar from close range when it looked easier to score. Those eventually cost the Edinburgh side as Kilmarnock grew in confidence.

The Rugby Park combine also had chances in a hugely-entertaining first period, described by commentators as one of the best they had seen, but the scoreline was blank after the opening 45 minutes.

The game looked to be going in Kilmarnock's favour until Atkinson found the target, leaving the home fans to vent their frustration with a chorus boos at the final whistle.

Overall, Hearts had 61 per cent of the possession against 39 per cent from the home side, but Killie had six shots on target against five from their rivals.

The Jambos move up to fifth in the table with 14 points from nine starts while Kilmarnock also move up to tenth. They have eight points from ten games, the same points as Ross County who have also had ten fixtures and three in front of bottom side Dundee United who have a game in hand.

Derek McInnes, Kilmarnock's manager, said that he was disappointed that his men gave away a foul in the dying seconds which allowed Hearts to launch the ball into the box which led to the equaliser.

He said: "We had to see the game out and we missed a great chance at 2-1 so we had opportunities to make it more comfortable. You are playing against a team like Hearts who have so many attacking options."

Neilson also felt his men had chances early in the game and he added: "Score then and it is a different game but we then made individual errors. We managed to get a point from the game but I'm disappointed we didn't get all three as we created enough chances. We are not hitting top gear as much as we want."



Europa Conference League – Heart of Midlothian FC v Fiorentina
06/10/2022.

Hearts beaten 3-0 by a slick Fiorentina side in the Europa Conference League at Tynecastle that deals a severe blow to their knockout hopes.

Credit: Ian Jacobs