

Hearts edged at Ibrox by Tillman strike

American international Malik Tillman slotted after 66 minutes to separate Rangers and Hearts and keep the Ibrox men seven points behind Old Firm rivals Celtic in the cinch Scottish Premiership title race.

Ryan Kent set up the chance, beating three defenders with great footwork on the left hand side of the box, before passing to Croatian defender Borna Barisic. He squared the ball the on-loan Bayern Munich player who slid in unmarked in the centre of the penalty box to net Substitute Alfredo Morelos then missed a chance from close-range to make sure late-on.

The visitors, minus Jorge Grant whose appeal against the red card received in the first-half against Motherwell on Sunday at Tynecastle, worked hard throughout, their best chance coming on a breakaway and involving Josh Ginnelly (pictured by **Nigel Duncan**) following a fine pass from Robert Snodgrass. Alan McGregor rushed from his goal to the edge of the box to put pressure on the Englishman.

And Ginnelly was heavily involved in another chance, sending the ball into the Rangers' box from the right, but Andy Halliday just failed to connect. He dropped to his knees in frustration.

However, Tillman's goal was enough to secure the points for the under-pressure Rangers side who have 32 points from their 14 outings and it proved a vital win for the Glasgow combine as Celtic edged Motherwell 2-1 at Fir Park to move onto 39 points.

Hearts are fifth in the table with 20 points from 14 fixtures and are only two points out of third position which is

currently held by Aberdeen with fourth-placed Livingston also on 22 points.

Robbie Neilson told BBC Scotland Sport that he felt his men worked hard. They tried, he said, to impose themselves on the game and the manager added: "There were periods of the game we were on top, as always against the Old Firm, there are periods when Celtic or Rangers are on top."

His opposite number, Giovanni van Bronckhorst, felt his men started well but was disappointed that the space they created was not translated into goals.

He added: "I am happy that we won the three points. The title race is still on. We give everything we have to win the game. We had to be really focused the whole game and, in the last 20 minutes, we did not give anything away.

"I am happy to get the three points for the team and for the club. It is important to get three points on Saturday (against St Mirren at Paisley) then we have a break of five weeks before we play our first competitive game after the World Cup. We can rest a bit, we can recover and prepare for the second phase."

Overall, Rangers enjoyed 54 per cent of possession against 46 per cent from their opponents and had 17 shots, six of them on target, against seven from Hearts, none on target, who host a Livingston side boosted by their narrow midweek win over Aberdeen at Tynecastle on Saturday (15.00).