

# Hearts fans 'Glad All Over' at gutsy win over Well

The fans were in full voice at the final whistle after ice cool Lawrence Shankland (pictured by *Nigel Duncan*) slotted the game-winning penalty for ten-man Hearts in a dramatic 3-2 victory over Motherwell at Tynecastle in the cinch Scottish Premiership, but he was only one of 14 heroes who played their part on a heady day for the jubilant Jambos.

Alex Cochrane, who had an outstanding afternoon, earned the 88th minute spot kick, picking up the ball and driving down the left hand side of the pitch towards the Motherwell goal. His ball into the box was adjudged to have been handled by Sondre Solholm Johansen. Over to Shankland.

Earlier, Andy Halliday grabbed a two-minute double, one with his head and the second with a delicious left-foot shot from the edge of the box, and skipper Craig Gordon had a telling, late, one-handed save in injury time.

However, it would be wrong to single out individuals in a thrilling game which had everything, including the inevitable VAR controversy, but more of that later.

Hearts and Motherwell take the field at Tynecastle ahead of their cinch Scottish Premiership clash

The victory propels Hearts into fourth spot in the twelve-strong table with 20 points from 13 games, two behind third-placed Aberdeen and nine adrift of Rangers who they play at Ibrox on Wednesday (19.45).

Robbie Neilson, Hearts' manager, was delighted with the spirit of the group against Motherwell. They brought energy to the pitch, he said, and added that the players had a belief that they could win this game even with Jorge Grant red-carded after 38 minutes, a decision Neilson did not agree with, and

even when the opposition had brought the scoreline back to 2-2 after being 2-0 down.

The boss said: "I am delighted for the players and I thought they gave everything for the club, the group and the fan base, and I hope we can take that forward to Ibrox. We want to go there and try to win the game"

Hearts also entertain Livingston on Saturday (15.00) in their final game before the World Cup hiatus but back to Sunday, and the Jambos had 15 shots, seven on target, against 18 from the opposition who had five on target.

According to figures on the cinch Scottish Premiership pages, Motherwell had 54 per cent of possession against 46 per cent for the home side and the Lanarkshire combine had 378 passes against 337 from Hearts, but the numbers which really mattered were Hearts 3, Motherwell 2.

Neilson said that the adaptability of his squad during the recent spate of injuries had been crucial and he cited the case of Halliday, a man who can play in different roles and can score goals.

He argued that Hearts had achieved Sunday's confidence-boosting win despite travelling back and forth to Istanbul last week for their UEFA Europa Conference League fixture. Motherwell, he said, had enjoyed a full week to prepare for the gam.

Neilson revealed: "Players have not trained at all since we came back from Istanbul, we just had to recover and then we had ten men for over 50 minutes and we still won. The objective now is to try and get third (place in the table) before the break (for the World Cup)."

Even when Hearts went down to ten men the manager still believed a positive result was possible from his men against Motherwell and he was asked in the post-match briefing about

VAR.

He said: "I think VAR is a really good thing, but it is the way it is implemented that is the problem. I hope we can tidy things up."

Earlier, Hearts started the fixture strongly against Well and were rewarded by two goals from Halliday, the first just before half-time when he sent a looping header into the far corner of the bottom right hand side of the net. Time: 45mins.

He struck again two minutes later with a left-foot drive from the left-hand edge of the box which flew into the bottom right hand corner. Industrious Robert Snodgrass and Barry McKay were involved in the build-up.

It took Motherwell until the 61st minute to open their account. Gordon was adjudged to have brought down substitute Louis Moulton at the edge of the box only seven minutes after he had been introduced for Connor Shields. It was converted with aplomb.

Minutes later big Motherwell striker Kevin Van Veen wheeled away in celebration after believing he had levelled from 12-yards only for VAR to disallow the goal for offside and the same player threatened soon after with a long-range effort.

Then Toby Sibbick was under close scrutiny from VAR for a suspected handball in blocking a shot, but Hearts survived before Blair Spittal netted after 79 minutes, nipping in ahead of Gordon to slot home from close range after a ball from the edge of the box.

Hearts dug deep as the clock ticked down and Cochrane picked up the ball and surged forward, putting real pressure on the Motherwell defence, to set up the spot kick. His team-mates were quick to salute his effort and Shankland did the rest, sending goalkeeper Liam Kelly the wrong way, to claim his 12th of the season for 3-2.

The nail-biting drama was not over as Gordon had to tip a Goss shot from the edge of the box over the bar and busy Cammy Devlin blocked another effort before referee Kevin Clancy called time.

Signal joy in the stands and cue the Dave Clark Five song "Glad All Over" which boomed out over the loudspeaker.