

# Atkinson and Devlin in contention for spots v Killie

Nathaniel Atkinson (pictured with Toby Sibbick *by Nigel Duncan*) fired home a spectacular goal four minutes into injury time as Hearts snatched a point in a 2-2 draw with lowly Kilmarnock at rain-soaked Rugby Park in October.

The Australian defender is back from the World Cup in Qatar, where he came up against French superstar Kylian Mbappe, and available for selection as the Ayrshire combine visit Tynecastle on Saturday in the cinch Scottish Premiership (kick-off 3pm).

Countryman Cammy Devlin is also back from the World Cup with Lionel Messi's shirt in his luggage, and he could also play but Kye Rowles, who was outstanding in Qatar, exciting interest from many, can't play as he was red carded in the 1-1 draw against Livingston on November 12, the Jambos last game before the World Cup.

Manager Robbie Neilson is not quite a full-strength for the joust against Derek McInnes' men. Long-term injuries mean Beni Baningime and Liam Boyce are still out and Peter Haring is still suffering from concussion with Stephen Humphrys also trying to shake off an ankle injury.

Hearts have not beaten Killie in their last five meetings in all competitions, with the Rugby Park outfit having won four. The 2-2 draw snapped that losing streak.

Neilson, however, will look to their last meeting and note that Hearts enjoyed 62 per cent of possession in Ayrshire against 38 from the home side.

And the Edinburgh side had 498 passes against 308 from the opposition.

Overall, both sides have won two of their last five league games but Killie have lost three while Hearts drew on their last outing.

The home side go into the game boosted by news revealed on Hearts' official website that Boyce has signed a contract extension, a man who is an integral part of the team, according to Neilson.

The deal means he stays at Tynecastle until 2024 with the option of a further year. Of course, the 31-year-old is currently sidelined with a cruciate injury.

Finally, Hibs have revealed that their Scottish Cup tie with Hearts will be screened by Viaplay at Easter Road on Sunday, January 22 (kick-off 2pm). Ticket information will be issued soon.