

Snodgrass stars as Hearts dig out point at St Mirren

Hearts had to come from behind to earn a valuable point at Paisley against a gritty St Mirren side who emerged after 90 minutes with a record of ten games unbeaten at home.

Overall, the Jambos dominated possession, 75 per cent to 25 per cent, and had 639 passes to 203 from the Buddies but their boss Stephen Robinson felt his men should have earned more from the fixture.

He told BBC Sport Scotland: "The game should have been out of sight in the first half, we created so many chances. We made Hearts look ordinary."

Experienced Robert Snodgrass (pictured), who was excellent throughout, helped dig the Men in Maroon out of a real hole in blustery conditions in the West of Scotland with an equaliser early in the second-half to set up Friday's return also in the cinch Scottish Premiership at Tynecastle.

Earlier, the the injury-hit Edinburgh club went behind after four minutes, goalkeeper Zander Clark left stranded after a free-kick from Saints midfielder Ryan Strain hit Hearts' defender Toby Sibbick in the face and deflected into the net.

Hearts responded and defender Alex Cochrane found Josh Ginnelly who fed Lawrence Shankland who was forced wide and his shot blocked.

Then Alex Grieve drove into the box for Saints but just failed to connect and a Ryan Flynn shot was deflected wide as the home side pushed forward.

Near half-time, Snodgrass sent a free-kick into the box and defender Kye Rowles glanced his header wide but it was the home side who went into the dressing-room ahead at the break after passing up a big chance in injury time.

However, Clark saved well from Main as the second-half got under but but Hearts broke through in four minutes when Snodgrass hit the ball in from outside the box and it ended its journey nestling in the back of the net.

Nine minutes later, Barry McKay slipped Alan Forrest into the box but he sent an effort into the side net and then Forrest turned into provider to find Michael Smith on the overlap. He found Shankland but the skipper sent his header at the St Mirren goalkeeper.

Shankland had another chance but headed over and Neilson made his first change, Stephen Humphrys replacing Forrest, but it was Saints who responded with Curtis Main forcing Clark into a save.

Neilson made his second change of an entertaining game at St Mirren Park, Jorge Grant replacing Cammy Devlin but Buddies' substitute Greg Kiltie had a sight of goal but sent his effort wide from 18-yards as the clock ticked down.

The home side were then reduced to ten men when defender Marcus Fraser was red carded five minutes into injury time after a VAR review following an incident with Grant.

Hearts now have 32 points from 20 games while St Mirren are sixth with 27 points from 19 games with Aberdeen claiming a 2-0 home victory over St Johnstone to stay in fourth on 29 points from 21 starts with Livingston, who beat bottom club Ross County 2-0 in Dingwall, in fifth on 28 points from 20

fixtures.

Neilson was also a disappointed man. He said: "It's a difficult place to come, so sometimes you just have to take the point. First half we dominated possession, but we dominated too deep. Second half we were higher up the pitch and that allows us to control the game."