

Hearts focused on Hamilton in Scottish Cup

Robbie Neilson confirmed that Cammy Devlin and Michael Smith are back to full training ahead of their televised Scottish Cup, fifth round, clash at Hamilton Accies on Friday (BBC, kick-off 19.45).

Hamilton are the underdogs and prop up the cinch Championship table with 18 points from 23 games, but have shown signs of improved lately, having gone six games without defeat, but Hearts are third in the cinch Premiership.

Their attack has only scored 19 goals and conceded 40 but they edged cinch Premiership side, Ross County, on penalties in the last round and Hearts are in no mood to fail here as they want to win the cup.

Skipper Lawrence Shankland is, of course, suspended and this game after his red card at Easter Road in the 3-0 defeat of city rivals Hibs in the last round, but his absence opens the door for somebody else to come in and show what they can do. They including Stephen Humphrys, Yutaro Oda and Garang Kuol.

Hamilton have an artificial surface, but Neilson said that did not really come into play as the club have nine days before their next fixture so that should give players time to recover.

Neilson and Hamilton manager John Rankin go back some years but the Jambos boss is focused and said: "We are the favourites for the game. It is up to use to make sure there is no slip-up."

Hearts lost 2-0 to Rangers in the last Scottish Cup Final, after extra time, and they also lost 4-3 to Celtic in the 2020 final, the sides being locked at 3-3 after extra time. He

added: "You go into a cup competition, the way it is in Scotland, and it is a route to silverware."

Hearts, he said, had gone to the final twice in recent years and lost but he added: "We want to take that next step. However, we have to make sure we can win the game (at Hamilton) and make the next round."