

Neilson calls on Hearts fans to roar squad to Cup win

Robbie Neilson urged Hearts' fans to roar the squad to victory in Saturday's quarter-final Scottish Cup clash with Celtic at Tynecastle (kick-off 12.15).

The Jambos boss praised his men despite their 3-1 defeat at Parkhead on Wednesday to the cinch Premiership pace-setters.

And Neilson told Hearts TV: "I've watched a lot of games here (at Parkhead) and that is as good a performance as I've seen from any Scottish team here."

Josh Ginnelly, a key player for Hearts currently, shocked home fans by netting the opener from a header after six minutes and Neilson said the quicksilver Englishman should be OK for the cup fixture.

Celtic, however, rattled in three goals, one in the first-half and two in the second, to secure another win and their manager Ange Postecoglou said the goals were "quality".

His counterpart Neilson said: "You get frustrated sometimes. It was a valiant effort but, ultimately, we lost the game and we want to come here and win.

"I thought, for 80 minutes, we were outstanding and we got the goal and then had a couple of slack moments. They have quality. They scored two goals but even at 2-1 I thought we were taking it to them."

Nelson felt that during the last ten or 15 minutes much-changed Hearts lost their energy, their steam and he added: "We did not get up the park but we had some moments and some of the play we had was outstanding."

He added: "We have to take some positives but we lost the game."

Looking ahead to Saturday, Neilson said: "The players were outstanding here but so were the fans. We will have 20,000 fans in there backing them (at Tynecastle). We need that. In the last ten minutes of the game here (at Parkhead) you could see that the energy was not quite there because of the energy they put in (during the game).

"IF we get the fans behind us (on Saturday) it could bring that energy out."

Postecoglu said Hearts are a good side and defended aggressively but his men, he added, showed strong mentaiity to get the job done and Celtic scored three quality goals.

Meanwhile, there are just over 250 tickets left for Hearts' trip to Pittodrie on Saturday, March 18 (15.00) in the cinch Premiership.