

Aberdeen close in on Hearts in race for third

Hearts remained in their recent rut when they were edged by ten-man Kilmarnock at Rugby Park in the cinch Premiership.

And it was a goal from former Hibs striker Christian Doidge on 45 minutes which clinched a welcome win for the Ayrshire combine.

The result now means that Hearts remain third on 45 points but by a slender point from Aberdeen who won 1-0 at St Johnstone and it underlined poor recent form by the Jambos who have lost their last three league games.

Kilmarnock are tenth with 28 points and are four ahead of Ross County and six in front of bottom club Dundee United.

Yet, skipper Lawrence Shankland handed Hearts a perfect start with a goal after seven minutes only for Daniel Armstrong to net from the penalty spot after 22 minutes to level and Doidge did the rest of the damage.

Rory McKenzie was red carded after 60 minutes after a challenge on Jorge Grant but Killie held out despite having only 35 per cent of possession and being out passed 464 to 255.

Killie boss Derek McInnes told BBC Scotland Sport that his men were "heroic" at times, particularly in the final 30 minutes and he added: "I'll take more of the same going forward."

Robbie Neilson (pictured by ***Nigel Duncan***), Hearts' manager, said: "It was not good enough. It is hugely disappointing. The only way to get out of the rut we are in is to work hard and do the basics well."