

Naismith looking to build on midweek cup win

The last time Hearts played Ross County was on April 22 at Tynecastle and the blew the men from Dingwall away with a stunning display, firing six goals into the opposition net from Alex Cochrane, a double from Josh Ginnelly and three from Lawrence Shankland, one from the penalty spot.

The scoreline ended 6-1 in favour of the Edinburgh side and the pair clash in the cinch Premiership in the Highlands on Saturday (15.00).

Undoubtedly, the Jam Tarts will be keen to build on their midweek road win at Kilmarnock in the Viaplay Cup which earned them a semi-final with favourites Rangers at Hampden on Sunday, November 5 (15.00).

Steven Naismith's men have won three of the last five games between the sides and also drawn the other two and Tuesday's victory at Rugby Park has boosted spirits in the camp.

Hearts are currently sixth in the 12-strong table with seven points from their six starts, the same points as Hibs who they are in fifth spot.

Malky Mackay's men are seventh in the table and have won two

of their last five games, drawing another. Hearts have won one of their last five and drawn another but Naismith is keen to get points on the board with a tough schedule on the horizon.

On Saturday, October 7, Hibs visit Tynecastle (15.00) in the league in Matchday eight of 33. Then pace-setting Celtic are the visitors on October 22 (14.15) and the Men in Maroon then visit Ibrox on October 29 (15.00).

Naismith told Hearts official website that he was delighted with the response of his players at Rugby Park after their narrow defeat at St Mirren in their previous outing and Alex Lowry's winner in the second minute of injury time was massive for the club and the player who is on loan from Rangers.

The head coach said: "On the back of a poor result at the weekend and us not being good enough defensively. We had a game plan. I thought all night (at Kilmarnock) we carried a threat and consistently created good chances.

"You have to be pleased with so many good responses. Jorge Grant has not played loads of minutes but his performance was superb. Calem (Nieuwenhof) in the middle of the pitch, I thought had his best game and it showed and insight into what he is going to bring to this football club. He is a very good player, he just needs time.

"The boys coming off the bench. Alex Lowry. I'm not sure how many players would have had the composure that he had. I want to see that more often. We see flashes of great talent, and he is a great talent, but we need to see it in games like this.

"I said to him before he went on the pitch, go and be the match winner and he turns up with an incredible moment so that is brilliant for him."

PICTURE: Calem Nieuwenhof (left) and Kenneth Vargas in training in midweek at The Oriam. Picture by **Nigel Duncan**