

Shankland strikes twice as Hearts bounce back

Lawrence Shankland netted a glory double as Hearts moved up the cinch Premiership table to fourth with a narrow win at Motherwell.

The club skipper (pictured in training) prodded the ball home from close range after 27 minutes and scored again on a counter-attack after 71 minutes, his fifth goal in five games.

Blair Spittal pulled one back after 78 minutes from the penalty spot but Stuart Kettlewell's men have now lost seven of their last nine games.

Strangely, the Fir Park side have not registered a victory since edging the Jambos at Tynecastle by a single goal in early September but this victory is a boost for Hearts' head coach Steven Naismith and his men.

It is only their second win in six fixtures and they have not hit their best form yet but the Gorgie side have now bounced back from their Viaplay Scottish League Cup defeat by Rangers at Hampden.

And they now have 17 points from 12 games and are just two points behind third-placed St Mirren who surprisingly lost 4-0 at Dundee who are fifth in the table and also on 17 points from 12 games.

Steven Naismith told BBC Sport Scotland: "It was a big win. We performed really well and were brave on the ball. It was a good afternoon."