

Naismith keen to add to Celtic success

Hearts and St Mirren both have 26 points in the cinch Premiership with the Tynecastle team having a game in hand and also in third position because of a superior goal difference.

The Capital combine have a goal difference of two while St Mirren have a goal difference of minus one. Hearts have scored 17 goals and let in 15 while St Mirren have scored 21 and conceded 22.

The West of Scotland club have won two of the last five games between the teams. Hearts have won once with two draws, however, and Hearts' head coach Steven Naismith does not want to slip up on home turf on Saturday (kick-off 15.00), particularly after their spectacular success at Parkhead last Saturday when the Men in Maroon emerged with a 2-0 win.

Naismith said: "I was really pleased with so many aspects of the performance (at Celtic). How we set up in our structure, how we were composed in possession, the quality of the goals we scored."

He was understandably up-beat after the game and told Hearts TV: "You've got Jorge Grant getting injured but wanting to stay on, you have Natianial Atkinson who is just coming back and giving his all for as long as he can. You have two of the Academy boys playing in games."

Stephen Kingsley, injured late in the first-half at Parkhead saving an almost certain goal, could be an injury worry for Naismith ahead of the match which kick-starts a busy Festive spell for the Jambos.

They visit Easter Road for the Capital derby on Wednesday, December 27 (20.00) and host Ross County on Saturday, December 30 (15.00) before travelling to Livingston on January 2 (15.00).

Football then goes into cold storage for the winter break but Naismith would love to have collected maximum points from the up-coming games.

However, The Buddies edged a `1-0 win over Hearts in September and go into the game after a no-score draw at Paisley against Motherwell on their last outing and a 2-0 victory over Ross County at the same venue.

Those results followed a 2-0 defeat at Ibrox against Rangers and a 1-0 reverse at St Johnstone.

PICTURE: Jorge Grant plays the pain game against St Johnstone.
Picture ***Ian Jacobs***