

Rangers bookies favourites for Tynecastle clash

Second-placed Rangers visit Tynecastle on Wednesday night (20.00) providing Hearts with a massive test only hours after head coach Steven Naismith and the coaching team celebrated winning the Glen's Manager of the Month award for November.

Wins over Livingston (1-0), Motherwell (2-1), St Johnstone (1-0) and Kilmarnock (1-0) have seen Hearts move into third position, but Rangers visit is a massive test against a side which has won four of the last five meetings between the clubs. There has been one draw.

Rangers beat Hearts 3-1 in the Scottish League Cup semi-final at Hampden on November 5 with a James Tavernier double (one from a penalty) and a counter from Scott Wright.

That result came only days after Rangers won 2-1 at Ibrox in the cinch Premiership, coming from behind thanks to goals from Tavernier from the penalty spot after 90 minutes and Danilo Pereira da Silva three minutes into injury time. Skipper Lawrence Shankland had netted an early opener for the Jambos.

Hearts have accumulated 23 points with seven wins, two draws and five defeats in 14 starts while Rangers have 31 points from the same number of games. They have won ten, drawn one

and lost three.

Significantly, the Ibrox men have scored 29 goals and let in seven, the lowest number in the 12-strong division. Hearts have scored 14 goals and conceded 12 but they are on a roll and Naismith is determined to keep that winning run going.

A full house will be behind the team on Wednesday but Rangers are unbeaten under new manager Philippe Clement and they beat St Mirren 2-0 in Sunday in Glasgow with Abdallah Sima scoring a goal in each half.

The on-loan Brighton and Hove Albion striker has bagged 11 goals so far and the Ibrox men are odds-on favourites with bet365 at 8/15 and Coral give odds of 5/1 for a Hearts victory with a draw at 7/2 with Paddy Power.

Rangers, recently, have done well at Tynecastle, last season winning twice scoring seven goals (3-0 and 4-0) without conceding but Ibrox old boy Naismith would love to be celebrating a home win around 10pm on Wednesday night.

PICTURE: Steven Naismith in the dugout against St Johnstone by ***Ian Jacobs***