

Hearts eye Steelmen in sell-out home clash

Steven Naismith's men have enjoyed almost a clear week to prepare to entertain a Motherwell side who were embroiled in a roller-coaster midweek ride in a 3-3 draw at Neil Warnock's Aberdeen after being 3-0 ahead in 26 sensational minutes following their shock, televised Scottish Cup exit at Greenock Morton.

A double from substitute Henriques de Barros Lopes (known as Duk) and a single from another substitute, Stefan Gartenmann, leveled the game at Pittodrie after 50 minutes and Well boss Stuart Kettlewell told BBC Sport Scotland: "When you are three goals up at a place like Pittodrie, you need to see the game out."

The point earned moves Motherwell into seventh spot in the 12-strong cinch Premiership with 26 points from 25 games, the same points as Hibernian who are eighth and have played one fixture less. Aberdeen are ninth with 26 points from 24 fixtures.

Well are now unbeaten in their last five, with one win and four draws to their record in the league. They have scored 35 goals and let in 39. Hearts are third with 48 points from 25

starts and have won their last five in the league. They have scored 33 goals and conceded 22.

The Jambos have won 15 league games against Motherwell's five but the Fir Park side lead the league in draws this term, 11 in total against three from Hearts.

Tickets for the game are sold out but the club say the Ticket Exchange is now open for the clash against The Steelmen and the Men in Maroon are on a high after their Scottish Cup win at the Excelsior Stadium against Airdrie on Sunday.

That brought the Jambos run to ten wins in their last 11 games with one hiccup, a 2-2 home draw with Ross County, but Hearts will be tested in the next few weeks with the fixture against Motherwell (kick-off 15.00) followed by a trip to Rangers on February 24 (15.00), a home joust with Capital rivals Hibs on February 28 (19.45) followed by a visit by Celtic to Tynecastle on March 3 (12.00).

PICTURE: Lawrence Shankland shooting v St Mirren