

Vargas deal boost for Hearts ahead of Killie clash

It's back to cinch Premiership duty for Hearts and they host Kilmarnock on Saturday (15.00) with the sides 11 points apart in the 12-strong table.

Third-placed Hearts have 55 points from 30 games and the men from Rugby Park have 44 from the same number of fixtures.

The Jam Tarts have a goal difference of nine having scored 39 goals and shipped 30 against one of six for the Ayrshire combine who have also scored 39 but let in 33.

The head-to-head record in the last five matches, three of them this term, sees Hearts with three wins and Killie with one.

There has been one draw and that came at Tynecastle on August 13 when both sides failed to find the net.

Previously, Hearts won 1-0 at Rugby Park on December 23 and 2-1 on the road in the Scottish League Cup in late September.

Both sides have two wins to their credit in their last five games, but Killie also include two draws in their run with only one defeat and they have been boosted by news that Rory McKenzie has penned a one year extension to his contract.

The midfielder has made nearly 400 appearances for the club after making his debut in April 2011.

Another bonus was their form in the 5-2 thrashing of St Mirren at the BBSP Stadium on March 16 when Killie trailed 2-0 after 39 minutes but stormed back with five unanswered goals between the 61st and 79th minutes.

Hearts have lost twice, including their 2-1 defeat in their last league outing which came on March 16 at Ross County, Simon Murray scoring twice in seven minutes both sides of the break, and drawn once.

The Tynecastle club have confirmed on social media the permanent signing of Kenneth Vargas who makes his loan move from CS Herediano, signing a five-year deal for an undisclosed fee. It is subject to Scottish Football Association approval.

Vargas was a second-half substitute for Costa Rica in a 3-1 play-off win over Honduras and they progress to this summer's Copa America.

Meanwhile, tickets for Hearts' Scottish Gas, Scottish Cup semi-final with Rangers at Hampden on Sunday, April 21 (15.00) are on sale and 10,000 have already been snapped up.

And tickets for Hearts' trip to St Mirren on Saturday, April 6 are sold out.

PICTURE: Kenneth Vargas in action at Livingston earlier this season. Picture **David Mollison**