

Martindale aiming to make it 'competitive' at Tynecastle

Livingston prop up the cinch Premiership table with only 18 points from 32 matches so far and they come to Tynecastle on Saturday looking for only their fourth win of the season.

The Jambos have 59 points from their 32 fixtures and head coach Steven Naismith is keen to continue piling up the points to consolidate third position in the table behind Celtic and Rangers.

Hearts have scored 42 goals and conceded 32. Livingston have scored 20 and lost 55 but no chances will be taken as the Gorgie side have only beaten David Martindale's team twice in the last five meetings.

Two have been draws and The Lions have won the other. Hearts have won three of their last five matches and drawn one. Livingston have lost three and drawn two.

But the Jam Tarts found it tough at Almondvale in early January and emerged with a 2-1 win thanks to goals from Kenneth Vargas after 53 minutes and Lawrence Shankland in 64 minutes.

Martindale, on YouTube, admitted that it is not an ideal time currently as regards injuries. He said: "We'll patch guys up and get them on the park."

He stressed the need for his squad to win football matches as he bids to beat the drop and he said: "Hearts are the third best team in this country by a considerable distance.

"Steven (Naismith) has done a very good job at Hearts and it is one of the best run clubs in the country and the fan base is phenomenal and all the people at Hearts have done a fantastic job to grow the club.

"It is going to be a difficult game as they are a really progressive club and they are moving in the right direction."

Martindale (pictured) added that most weeks his players have tried to remain positive despite their lowly position and he added: "At 5pm on Saturday we'll have a wee look at the league and assess where we are then and I'll put all my energy into how we can affect them (Hearts).

"It is going to be a competitive game of football but the last performance at Tynecastle wasn't overly great and the game here was very good so we are trying to find that balance between both performances."