

Kyogo double puts skids under Hearts

Hearts travelled to Parkhead in confidence having won their two previous clashes with Celtic, but they returned along the M8 after a 3-0 defeat by The Bhoys who continue to lead the cinch Premiership.

Kyogo Furuhashi netted twice after four and 21 minutes, the first time that he has scored more than one in a game in a year, and Matt O'Riley scored from the spot after 87 minutes to move on to 84 points from 35 games and heap pressure on Old Firm rivals Rangers who are now six points behind but who host Kilmarnock at Ibrox on Sunday (13.00).

Earlier, the Jambos took the game to Celtic from the first whistle, defender Dexter Lembikisa whipping the ball towards goal and Lawrence Shankland fired for goal. The ball was turned behind for a corner.

Three minutes later Celtic went in front from a corner. O'Riley's ball was met by Kyogo who headed into the net for 1-0 and the visitors responded when Cammy Devlin's volley forced former England international Joe Hart into a fine save.

Then Cameron Carter-Vickers sent a header over the bar from a corner and it was no surprise when the home side went 2-0 ahead and Kyogo did the damage after 21 minutes.

Then goalkeeper Zander Clark kept Hearts in the game saving from Greg Taylor and O'Riley and the international stopper also saved from Kyogo as the first-half ended.

Then central defender Kye Rowles saved Hearts with a timely tackle before Clark was called upon again to deny Reo Hatate and Nicolas-Gerrit Kuhn.

Steven Naismith, Hearts' head coach, rang the changes with Jorge Grant and Lembikisa off and Scott Fraser and Nathaniel Atkinson on. Later Stephen Kingsley and Devlin were taken off and Yutaro Oda and Barrie McKay introduced.

Soon after, Oda forced Hart into another fine save and more there were more changes for Hearts as Vargos exited and Kyosuke Tagawa entered the fray.

It was, however, Celtic who counted when they were awarded a penalty for handball by Shankland after a VAR check. O'Riley did the rest from the spot and in-form Celtic, who impressed throughout, coasted to victory.

Brendan Rodgers, Celtic's manager, told BBC Sport Scotland, there was real energy in the stadium and he added: "In a big game we had big performances and big contributions."

Naismith said: "The result is disappointing, poor and frustrating but, in the performance, there was loads of good stuff."

Celtic now host Rangers next Saturday (12.30) while Hearts entertain Dundee (15.00).

PICTURE: Library picture of Lawrence Shankland in action