

McKay quality could be key at St Mirren

Barrie McKay oozed quality as Hearts claimed a 3-0 victory over Dundee at Tynecastle on Saturday.

Jambos head coach Steven Naismith (pictured in the Tynecastle dugout) will obviously hope that the player produces if selected for the trip to Paisley on Wednesday (19.45) in the second phase of the cinch Premiership.

Naismith was full of praise for McKay who produced flashes of quality and assisted in two of the goals on Saturday, the opener for Kenneth Vargas and the second scored by Alan Forrest, but Naismith confirmed that the player is not fully fit after injury problems this season. But he said: "His quality is there."

So what do the stats say? Well, the numbers are that Hearts have won only one of their last three matches. Their hosts have a similar record.

The Jambos have scored 49 goals and conceded 37 while The Buddies have scored 42 and let in 47.

Naismith's men have 66 points from their 36 matches to date while Saints have 46, that's a big gulf, but nobody at Tynecastle believes this will be anything but a tough clash as St Mirren could claim a spot in European football if they beat Hearts.

Their skipper Mark O'Hara is determined to experience playing in Europe after seeing first hand Kilmarnock's celebrations at Paisley on Saturday following their 1-0 win over The Buddies.

Hearts last met the Paisley side on April 6 at St Mirren where Hearts edged the game 2-1 and Naismith's men won 2-0 at Tynecastle just before Christmas.

However, The Buddies won 1-0 at Paisley on September 23.

Historically, the head-to-head shows that in the 25 games between the sides St Mirren have won seven and the Jambos 12 with six draws and Hearts will look for a positive outcome from the trip.

Why? Because Rangers visit Tynecastle on Saturday (12.30) in the final game of the season.