

Seventh heaven on Tayside for six goal Hearts

Hearts claimed a seventh straight win thanks to a 6-0 win over Dundee at Dens Park, a huge win by a side which dominated play, much to the delight of the huge travelling support.

Earlier, Lawrence Shankland (pictured) made his first appearance since the Edinburgh derby, partnering Elton Kabangu, while new defender Michael Steinwender was on the substitutes bench along with Calum Nieuwenhof. Dundee-born Lewis Neilson was in defence after coming on as a substitute against Kilmarnock last weekend.

There was a lively start at The Scot Foam Stadium with George Mulligan sending in a teasing ball which was headed clear by Neilson and, at the other end, Kabangu fired the ball across the six-yard box. There were no Jambos there to connect.

Blair Spittal and James Penrice combined down the left and a first-time cross from Shankland was headed towards goal only to see 36-year-old Northern Irish goalkeeper, Trevor Carson, send the ball over the bar.

Dundee began to force the pace and Simon Murray earned their first corner on the right. It came to nothing, then good interchange play by Spittal and Penrice earned a corner at the other end. It failed to trouble Dundee.

The game continued from end-to-end and Murray was the next to

test a goalkeeper, Gordon collecting. Seconds later, Hearts took the lead and it was vintage Shankland following a pass from Spittal. Little back lift but an inch-perfect shot with his left foot from an angle into the bottom corner. Carson had no chance. VAR was surprisingly consulted, but the goal stood. Time 15 minutes.

Hearts then went 2-0 ahead when Spittal fired a pin-point shot past Carson with his left foot, his sixth of the season, high into the net. What a beauty on the half volley, a brilliant goal and only two minutes after Shankland's strike.

The Men in Maroon were 3-0 behind at half-time on their last visit. What a contrast here.

Carson was forced to dive to his left to palm away a head flick from one of his own players following a Spittal free-kick on the left, then Bengi Banningime claimed the ball with a strong tackle in midfield and Kabangu drove into the box before firing in a shot which was saved by the strong right hand of Carson.

Kabangu was felled by a tackle from former Brighton and Hove Albion defender Imari Samuels who earned the first booking of the game as Dundee tried to claw their way back but Hearts' defence, with Jamie McCart solid, and Cammy Devlin plus Banningime grafting in midfield, stood firm.

But Dundee kept plugging away and Murray connected with a cross near the penalty spot following a Mulligan cross from the right, but the ball was fired straight at Gordon who mopped up. Dundee pressed again and won a corner in the left but Shankland was back helping out his defence and the ball was cleared and the sides returned to the dressing-room with a two-goal lead for the visitors.

The home side had edged possession in the opening 45 minutes and had 179 passes against 158 from the visitors but they were behind and Tony Docherty unsurprisingly made two changes, Seb

Palmer-Houlden and Finlay Robertson coming on.

Spittal and Penrice were injured in the first Dundee raid of the half, the former Livingston man requiring treatment, but Hearts shrugged that off to claim a third after 51 minutes. Devlin won the ball, found Shankland and his brilliant, right-foot pass found on-loan Belgian Kabangu, and the 26-year-old kept his composure to slide the ball home. A flowing move and a well-taken goal.

Minutes later Forrester landed awkwardly after jumping for a high ball, but he recovered and the ball found its way to Spittal who fired for goal. Carson saved comfortably.

Play became scrappy and Penrice was in the wars again, felled by Sylla, and, from the free kick, Carson fumbled, dropping the ball near Musa Drammeh who slid in to bundle the ball home for 4-0 after 67 minutes. Dens Park fans, in the crowd of 7,458, started to leave despite there being 22 minutes remaining.

Docherty made another change but The Jambos also switched their line-up with Kenneth Vargas and Alan Forrest coming on. The Costa Rican's first action was to connect with a Shankland pass and his right-foot shot was kicked away by Carson with his right foot.

There was a scare from a Dundee free-kick when Clark Robertson headed into the side net but seconds later, at the other end, Kabangu smashed the ball into the net for 5-0 after a Penrice corner on the left and a deft flick inside the box from Vargas. Time 77 minutes.

Yan Dhanda and James Wilson were introduced for the industrious Shankland and sharp-shooter Kabangu, who has claimed five goals in four games, as the Hearts fans celebrated.

Coach Neil Critchley then introduced Austrian defender Michael

Steinwender for Neilson to play alongside Jamie McCart, a real rock in the Jambos rearguard, and Hearts broke from defence, the ball finding Forrest who sped into the opposition penalty box.

Carson saved for a corner and Devlin then crashed the ball against the bar. The Aussie could not believe had not scored.

The Jambos continue to drive forward and the ball fell to Steinwender from a corner but his shot was blocked.

Three minutes were added and Vargas added a sixth with a cool finish with his right foot for his third of the season after a great pass from Forrest for a 6-0 scoreline which inched the Jambos closer to the top six in the William Hill Premiership.

Dundee (starting): Carson, C Robertson, Astley, Mulligan, Cameron, Adewumi, Samuels, Garza, Murray, Sylla, Donnelly. Subs: McCracken, Tiffoney, Palmer-Houlden, Ingram, F Robertson, Lopez, McGhee, Larkechie, Portales.

Hearts (starting): Gordon, Banningime, Shankland, Devlin, Spittal, Kabangu, Neilson, Penrice, McCart, Forrester, Musa. Subs: Clark, Nieuwenhof, Steinwender, Forrest, Boateng, Dhanda, Wilson, Vargas, Taylor.