

# James McPake wants to win tie for Lawrie Reilly



Hibs skipper James McPake hopes that the emotion involved following the death of Lawrie Reilly can help the club progress in Europe, and believes that the fans' backing will be a major factor.

Speaking after training on the Easter Road pitch yesterday, the 29-year-old said: "Lawrie's death is probably more important than the game. People will be turning up for him because he was a great man.

"I only met him maybe two or three times but every time I did he was such a genuine person.

"Everyone at the club loves him and people who have followed Hibs all their years say how great a player he was.

"I did a few things with Lawrie and met him at awards ceremonies and stuff. The fans are great with us when we turn up to these events but it was different with him, you could see the huge respect everyone had for him.

"That was even the case with the younger fans, who had been told by their parents and grandparents how good a player he was. My dad told me the same when I asked him."

"There will be emotion against Malmo but that is maybe something we can use to our advantage. What better way to go out and win the tie than for Lawrie and his family as well.

"When the Hibs fans are behind us and create a brilliant atmosphere, it does help us. It makes a real difference and a couple of games come to mind – Dunfermline when we had to win last year. We got off to a flier that night.

“Celtic last season was the same; we were 1-0 up and hanging on. It seemed as if they were willing us to get the ball up the park that day.

“If they can create that type of atmosphere again, it will definitely be an advantage for us. We want them right behind us, backing us from the off.

“I don’t know what the other grounds are like in Sweden and if we can make it hostile and uncomfortable for them when they have the ball, and the crowd can get right behind us, it will only help us.”

The big defender however warns that the players won’t be going for the jugular from kick off as losing a goal would potentially end the tie as a contest.

He continued: “A Malmo goal would take it from hard to almost impossible. That’s not to say we would give up if we concede after five minutes – we won’t. Regardless of whether it takes us 10, 30, 60 or 80 minutes, as long we score the first goal then that would be great. As long as we are not conceding, getting a goal will give Malmo a bit of a fright, no matter how late it might be.”

Meanwhile, manager Pat Fenlon revealed that Northern Ireland international Ryan McGivern will be missing after failing to recover from a knee injury although teenage winger Alex Harris is fit and will play if selected.

“Ryan is struggling and he won’t make it but Alex will be okay. He trained all week and came through the game against Malmo as a substitute. There was no recurrence and he has had a couple of really good days training.

“Alex gives us a completely different dimension to what we have, he can play on both sides and he is a real threat for us. It is up to us to get him enough of the ball to cause problems.

“He added pace last week that we maybe lacked up until that point. Liam Craig is a really good player but is completely different to Alex, so if we can get the two of them on the park then it will be a real attacking threat for us.”

The club have announced that over 13,000 tickets have been sold with the East Stand full. Tickets are available right up until kick off time.