

# Danny Handling latest victim of Hibs' injury jinx



Danny Handling is the latest Hibs' player to fall foul of the right midfield jinx after manager Pat Fenlon confirmed that the teenager will be missing from the squad to face St Johnstone in Perth on Saturday, whilst previously, winger Alex Harris suffered an injury against Motherwell in the opening game of the season, and Paul Cairney's leg has been in plaster since a training ground accident in pre-season.

Speaking at the weekly press conference, Fenlon said: "That right-sided position seems to be jinxed at the moment, as we had Paul Cairney, Alex Harris and Danny Handling in there and they've all been injured."

He revealed that new signing Abdellah Zoubir will definitely be in the squad although he did concede to be taken aback by the expectations of the fans who have yet to see him play, following his double against Rangers in a closed door game at the club training ground.

"It's amazing how football works these days, as the fans haven't seen the player yet, but they know all about him. He'll be a great addition, and he's a different type of player to what we have at the club. He's a good player, and when the Hibs supporters do see him they'll get excited by him. Zoubir has got great balance and two great feet, and his ball control and awareness and positional sense are very good. He's also direct, and he likes to take people on and have a go and he's really different to any of the ones that play in that position.

"When you're looking for wide players it's good to have someone like that, and he can play on both sides and we knew

he could score goals as well. He's chipped in with a few goals and he's a calm finisher, not a slasher of the ball. He has good feet, and the goals he got against Rangers were both cool finishes. Zoubir can help create goals for the strikers and he'll provide plenty of ammunition for the players that we have up front."

"We had ten new players at our team photo, and it takes time for everything to gel. But that's the same for a lot of clubs: there seems to be a fair bit of turnover, just by the way things are.

"It's a strong squad, but everything can look great on paper: we've got to do it on the park. We have great competition and if we can get everyone fit it will give me a real headache. It's healthy competition, with a good balance between younger ones, middle-aged players and real experience. I'm pleased with the make-up."

"We're on a half-decent unbeaten run. Winning games will breed confidence and help players settle in that bit quicker. We have a really good squad here, although we seem to be getting people back then lose one or two, but I am very pleased with the squad we have. We now have to kick on and make sure that, with the quality of player we have, we get ourselves into a good position in the league.

Tomorrow's game will mean a return to Perth for Rowan Vine and Liam Craig whilst David Wotherspoon made the reverse trip to join his boyhood heroes, and Fenlon revealed that the club tried to keep him at Easter Road.

"I'm wary about St Johnstone as a whole, but David is a good player and we know lots and lots about him," he continued.. He's a player we tried to keep, and he decided to move on. I'm delighted he has had a good start to his career with St Johnstone because he is a fabulous professional and always worked tremendously hard. There's a fair bit of movement in

football and you often get players going back to their old clubs and playing against them. You would have to ask David why he moved on: it's his hometown club, so maybe that is something he factored in.

"As a manager, you pick the team based on who you think will win the game. Very, very few players stay at one club for their whole career and most players know what playing against their former club is about, whether you leave on good or bad terms."

Although skipper James McPake played the full 90 minutes against Motherwell in the Under 20s 2-1 win this week, neither he, nor Tim Clancy are likely to feature in Perth, whilst Handling Cairney and Northern Ireland internationalist Ryan McGivern will definitely miss the game through injury.