

Heff's first challenge is getting into Hibs' team



It would have been understandable if Hibs' new signing Paul Heffernan assumed that he would be guaranteed a starting place in a team that has only scored three times in six competitive games this season, however his first few training sessions at the club have convinced him that he will have to fight for his place.

Speaking at the weekly press conference ahead of today's clash with St Johnstone, the former Kilmarnock striker said that he wasn't put off by the Malmo result and believes that the quality of players in the squad should at the very least ensure a top six finish.

He said: "This is a good squad, it should be very competitive in this league, and we should be looking for at least a top six finish. There are no excuses. We have got the players here – now we have to go out and prove it on a Saturday.

"We have four good strikers here now and all of us are capable of scoring goals. Whoever is in the team will have to do enough to make sure the manager can't leave them out. It's all good healthy competition. Even if you are only getting on for the last half an hour, you have got to impress the manager and make sure it's hard to leave you out."

"My first challenge will be to get into the team. Once I do that I'll bring a bit of experience and hopefully get a few goals.

"The team hasn't been scoring a lot of goals recently, but from what I've seen in training we've got good strikers. So I'm sure once we start getting a few good results and our

confidence gets up we'll be fine.

"I saw the Malmo result but it wasn't something that put me off coming here. It was very early in the season – it was pre-season really. It's hard to judge a team on that because Malmo were a good side who are halfway through their season. It was just one of those nights where everything went for them. That can happen in football, but we can definitely get back to challenging for Europe. We have a squad here that is good enough to be in the top six, but there's no use saying that. You need to prove it on a Saturday."

"This is the time to start judging us now. The window is shut, the players are in. It's time for the talking to stop and for us to start performing on a Saturday. Especially at home, the home form has to improve."

"There is the potential to be a very big club. The training facilities are definitely a step up."

The 31 year old Dubliner admitted that the move to Easter Road was unexpected to say the least, so much so that he didn't even get the chance to say goodbye to his former team-mates.

"It did come out of the blue. I didn't expect it at all. I had the rest of the season left at Kilmarnock and I hadn't thought about leaving. I hadn't spoken to the manager about leaving. I didn't know anything about it until I spoke to my agent and he said that he had spoken to the chairman and he had said they were willing to let me go for free. That's when he started making phone calls to Hibs and other clubs. That's how it happened, but it's worked out well for me. I've signed a two-year deal at a bigger club and I'm delighted.

"It was a strange way to end. I had two great years there. But that's what happens sometimes when a new manager comes in. Maybe he wanted to use my wages to get some other players in, I don't know.

“I didn’t even have time to say goodbye to people. I literally went home from training on the Thursday thinking I would be back in the next day.

“Then I was told to be at Hibs on the Friday for a medical if I was interested – and of course I was. I’ve enjoyed the training, the lads have been great and I’m looking forward to some games now.”

Pat Fenlon will have to juggle his team once again, with influential captain James McPake and right back Tim Clancy doubtful, whilst Ryan McGivern, Danny Handling and Paul Cairney definitely out. Kevin Thomson will also miss the game through suspension.