

Business as normal as Hibs prepare to face Inverness



Hibs player/coach Alan Maybury has insisted it's business as normal for Hibs as they prepare to welcome Inverness Caledonian Thistle to Easter Road this afternoon. With speculation surrounding the vacant manager's position at Easter Road, and Inverness boss Terry Butcher regarded as firm favourite to take Pat Fenlon's place, there is an extra layer of intrigue about the match this afternoon.

Maybury acknowledged that the timing was a strange coincidence, but was adamant that the home side are focused on the match and not the manager:- "Fate has thrown up that we play them and it's a bit of a disruption for both clubs but these things are out of our hands. Jimmy [Nicholl] was told earlier in the week that he'd be in charge for this game so we've prepared as best as we can, as normal as we can."

While admitting there is always a period of uncertainty when a new manager comes in, Maybury said that the players just have to get on with their own jobs:- "I've been through this quite a few times. Maybe for one or two of the others who haven't it can be a bit unsettling and you start to wonder how it's going to affect yourself. But I find you can waste a lot of time and energy worrying about things you've got no control over. The chairman will ultimately decide who he wants to bring in and whoever that is they'll decide what staff he is bringing in and who's leaving and what players are getting changed.

"It's a little bit different facing it as part of the coaching staff rather than a player. When Pat left we tried to galvanise and see where we'd go from there – it was more than worrying for myself. Whoever comes in will have their own

ideas and they'll quickly make an assessment of what they want and don't want here. So it's been more trying to rally round with Jimmy and get our heads together and see what we're going to do this week and how we go on from here and try to keep it as normal as possible."

Longest-serving player Lewis Stevenson, who has seen seven managers come and go in his time at Easter Road, echoed Maybury's thoughts:- "It probably gets harder to deal with this situation when a manager leaves. When I was younger I was probably more blase and I just got on with it. To be honest, it's all I've known, I went from year to year with a new manager. I know what you've got to do, you've just got to be yourself, work hard and make sure you're in the manager's plans. If not, you have to fight your way in.

"Players do talk about the next manager, it's the natural thing to do, but you can't really do anything until the new manager's in place and you see what he's actually like. We can't really do anything until he comes in, and then we can take things from there."

With Terry Butcher tipped to be the next man in charge, Stevenson pointed out some of the qualities of his Inverness side that Hibs could learn from:- "We know he's done a great job at Inverness. We always hate playing against his teams – they're always well organised, work hard and I think they do play better football than they're given credit for.

"It would be good to play for a team that people hate playing against. Easter Road has been a place in the last few years where teams enjoy playing against us. So it would be nice if it was a place where teams didn't like playing against us. It's pretty much up to us to try and make it like that, and we'll see what we can do.

"We've got everything in place. We've got a great stadium, the fan-base, the training ground – everything's there. It's maybe

just the team that people are saying is not in place. Hopefully we can change that, but I do feel we've got a good enough squad to be competing higher up the league. It's easy saying it, we just need to go out and do it."

Meanwhile, Hibs striker Rowan Vine faces disciplinary action after being charged with "offensive comments on Twitter suggesting the use of violence". Vine, who was involved in a spat with Celtic manager Neil Lennon on the social networking site last month, has until 15th November to respond, with the hearing date set for 28th November.