

Malpas insists Hibs' players have to develop winning mentality



At Tuesday's press conference at Easter Road, whilst Terry Butcher was charming the media and spelling out his vision for the future, and Rod Petrie was insisting that he was head and shoulders above any other candidate; Maurice Malpas sat quietly at the table looking as if he would rather be elsewhere. The reason was that he would rather have been elsewhere.

The former Dundee United defender who spent the majority of his career under Jim McLean is a football man through and through, and whilst he is comfortable speaking to the press, he much prefers being on the training ground, doing what he does best; coaching players.

Having spent the morning at East Mains, Malpas was like a kid at Christmas who has had to leave his toys and visit relatives, but when Butcher and Petrie left to speak to the TV cameras, he took over and spoke passionately about his reasons for turning down the chance to become the Inverness Caledonian Thistle manager and what he expected or rather demanded from his new team.

He said: "I'm a football guy who likes being on the training field and the facilities here are unbelievable. And it's not anything to do with money. It's about the things here that Caley couldn't give me. That's why, as soon as Terry asked me, I said yes.

Since winning promotion, Inverness has never finished below Hibs, a statistic that Malpas is desperate to change he

insists that the lessons learned at Tannadice during his playing career will stand him in good stead.

“I hear people saying you’ve got to play the Hibs way. For me it’s about playing to win. Jim McLean was the first person to drum into us about doing this or that but you had to be a winner. You had to win the game; otherwise everything else was a waste of time. Why play well but get beat?

“That’s the mentality we’ve got to get into the fans, the players – it’s all about winning. There will be days when we’re flying and it’s great to watch. And there will be days when it’s absolute drivel but we still expect to win. That’s the mind-set.”

“If I hear any player say they can’t do it, then they’ll get a size eight boot up the backside.”

Malpas got a bird’s eye view of his new charges from the Easter Road dugout last Saturday as his Inverness team easily disposed of Hibs, but at that time his future was unclear.

He continued: “The uncertainty of last week was difficult for me. I didn’t know what was happening. Terry was in discussions from Wednesday but I didn’t know if I was going or not, whether I would get a chance to go, or whether I would get a chance to be manager if I didn’t.

“It was a sleepless week for me, an uncomfortable week, and, when they still hadn’t agreed the compensation, Kenny Cameron came to my house and asked me (to become the ICT manager). We had a fantastic discussion about it but, when I came to the club with Terry, we always said we would leave together, whether that was getting kicked out together or moving together. As soon as he said it was done and dusted, it was an easy decision for me.

“I want to be at a club that’s got a chance to win trophies. Caley Thistle have got a great chance this season, but I just

felt the potential here is far greater.

“I had five great years there and I thoroughly enjoyed them. The chairman and the board have been fantastic and helped us every time we asked for something. It’s like a family there.

“The chairman asked straight out if I wanted to be manager and virtually straight away I said ‘no’. I had been thinking about it, but I just felt that was the right decision. It was my gut feeling.

“The opportunity to come here was far greater than my desire to be a No 1 again. The potential here appeals to me. The facilities excite me too. Some mornings up at Fort George you’re lifting goals and your hands would stick to the goalposts. I walked out my office this morning on to a training ground and I hadn’t done that in 20 years of coaching. That might seem simple and trivial, but it’s a massive thing to me.”

So what can the supporters and players expect from Terry Butcher?

“He’s passionate – a lunatic at times but that’s just the passion. He demands from players what he demands from himself – give it your lot.

“He can accept people losing if they’re giving everything. You can’t demand a player plays well every week, but we can demand they work hard. He’s got a great drive and desire. Sometimes you come in in the morning and he just drives you on. He’s a breath of fresh air.

“We work well together and enjoy that. He’s good at what he’s good at, I’m good at what I’m good at and the two of us seem to gel. We have a ball. Everyone wants to enjoy their work and we certainly do that.”