

Who's next for the Easter Road hot seat?



Once again, Hibs fans anxiously await the announcement of a replacement manager following yesterday's departure of Pat Fenlon, and the Edinburgh Reporter looks at some of the potential candidates.

A poll on the Hibs-Net Fan's Forum has Inverness boss Terry Butcher as the preferred choice, and media reports this morning suggest that the former England captain heads Rod Petrie's list, and that an offer could be imminent.

Butcher has guided Inverness Caledonian Thistle to their highest ever league finish and but for Billy McKay missing an own goal in the semi-final of the League Cup against Hearts, he could easily have brought silverware to the Highlands.

Another popular choice would be former manager Tony Mowbray who built a young attractive side before leaving for West Bromwich Albion, although joining in the Celtic huddle on his return to Easter Road was thought to have been disrespectful by a number of fans.

Another former Hibs' manager who achieved a degree of success at Easter Road and is currently out of a job is Big 'Eck McLeish who brought in stars such as Franck Sauzee and Russell Latapy and presided over a famous 6-2 win over Hearts at Easter Road, however it is understood that the former Scotland boss sees his career in England. As with Mowbray, his move to Ibrox has not been forgiven by a section of the Hibs' faithful.

Assistant manager Jimmy Nicholl will take charge for Sunday's game against Motherwell at Fir Park, but it is unclear whether

he would be interested in the post.

Former Kilmarnock manager Kenny Shiels was in the Hibs' Director's box on Wednesday night which has caused some speculation, particularly since Nicholl was his number two at Rugby Park where they won the League Cup, beating Celtic in the final. Shiels is the father of former Hibs player Dean who was a popular figure with the fans.

One name mentioned by BBC last night as a serious contender was ex Scotland boss Craig Levine, and within seconds the fans' forums erupted in fury at the mere suggestion, given his Hearts' background and his perceived negative tactics with the national squad. With the Hibs' board keen to attract back disillusioned supporters, any approach to Levine would be unlikely.

Former player and manager John Collins' name is continually brought up whenever the manager's post becomes vacant and many fans were impressed by his high standards particularly in relation to training and fitness however whilst he did bring the League Cup back to Easter Road, his tenure saw a player revolt.

Derek Adams had a brief spell as Colin Calderwood's assistant and has punched well above his weight with Ross County, but whether he would be prepared to up sticks again is debatable.

Former Hibs captain Ian Murray took over Dumbarton midway through last season when they looked certain for relegation, but a string of excellent results saw the 'Sons climb the table to safety. Murray is a regular pundit on TV and is articulate, but taking over a club the size of Hibs at this stage of his career may be slightly premature.

Likewise Paul Hartley who has done wonders at Alloa Athletic may be seen as too inexperienced although his connection at Tynecastle would also be held against him by a significant proportion of supporters.

Whoever arrives will find an experienced squad of players available with a realistic chance of finishing in a European place.

Watch this space.