

Paul Hanlon enjoying life under Butcher and Malpas



Hibs defender Paul Hanlon is enjoying life under the new management team of Terry Butcher and Maurice Malpas and believes that their experience of having played at the highest level can only help him to progress in the game.

Hanlon is fast approaching 200 games for the club he supported as a youngster, a remarkable achievement given that he is still a month shy of his 24th birthday, but so far he has played under five different managers.

Speaking at the weekly press conference ahead of today's game against St Johnstone at Easter Road, the former Scotland Under 21 captain said: "I'm enjoying it. The manager's brought in a few different things, but everyone's buying in to what he's trying to do.

"First and foremost, he's working us really hard in training. He wants us to get the ball forward a bit quicker and create more chances, and basically put the other team's defence under a lot of pressure. Since he's been in we've done that in games. He's a big personality, but at times he's quiet, and will watch training, not say too much. But if you cross him he'll be right on your case.

"He's helping defenders out all the time. Maurice (Malpas) as well. He had a great career as a defender and myself and the other defenders try to learn as much as we can."

"When it's time to work it's time to work, but he enjoys a good laugh with the boys. When it's going well, as long as you do your best you can enjoy it at the same time.

“Before the Celtic game he was telling us the whole story of David and Goliath. Eventually he brings it back to football and it all falls into place.

“It gets you thinking. Last week it got us believing we would go there and get a good result. He’s good for things like that.

“Lawrence of Arabia and George Washington came up as well. The main theme was the smaller person overcoming the giant: that’s what he wanted us to do last week.

“It just gets you thinking. It’s something completely different from football, then slowly but surely it comes back and you realise where it’s going.”

Hanlon is looking forward to seeing his friend and former team-mate David Wotherspoon who will be returning to Easter Road for the first time since his summer move to his boyhood heroes, but warns that he will be desperate to prove to the Hibs’ fans that the club were wrong to let him go.

He continued: ““I’m looking forward to it, I’m sure he’ll be coming back with a point to prove,”

“He’ll be desperate to put in a good performance. He’s one of their main threats so we’ll have to keep an eye on him.

“St Johnstone are the club he supported as a boy, so he was delighted with his move. They offered a bit more security than he was being offered here. He’s had a kid now as well, so he’s settled and enjoying his football.”

Photograph by John Preece

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