

Ben Williams happy to remain at Easter Road



Since the appointment of Terry Butcher as manager of Hibs, the fans have been speculating about comings and goings at Easter Road, with opinions divided about several of the squad left by Pat Fenlon.

One man about whom there is no debate however is Ben Williams, generally considered to be the best Hibs' goalkeeper since Jim Leighton but with no news of an extended contract on the table, there is growing concern amongst the supporters about his future.

The former Colchester United keeper says that the ball is very much in the club's court as he and his family are more than happy in Edinburgh.

Speaking ahead of the Edinburgh derby, Williams' said: "I've not even had a chance to sit down with the manager, especially at this time, which is our busiest period. The games come thick and fast. I'm sure when the situation arises, he will pull me in and we'll talk about it. I've been happy. We've settled in really well as a family here."

The last derby ended in a 1-0 defeat and the subsequent resignation of Pat Fenlon after furious fans demonstrated outside the West Stand at the final whistle. Players leaving the ground were also subjected to verbal abuse, but despite the importance of the result amongst the supporters, Williams insists that the players must not get caught up in the atmosphere.

Williams continued: "There is no extra focus with it being a derby. We will approach it the same way we approach every

other game.

"We have to recognise the momentum we've built up, focus on the positives we've taken from the seven games the new management team have been in charge and take that into this game. Our aim is to win the game, please the fans and send everyone home happy.

"The improved mood comes with results. All footballers thrive on confidence. When that's there, they play much better. It's a simple formula, but it's not easy to pull off. I think we've worked hard at creating that mood here over the last seven games. The manager, and us as players, have put the hard work in and really grafted for the results that have put us in this position.

"If you get caught up in emotions like revenge it's never good. Revenge is a negative emotion and you shouldn't focus on a negative feeling going into a game."

"Fans pay very good money to come and watch football so they're entitled to their opinion. We could sense the fans' frustration. I've never been in a position like that before in football in terms of demonstrations outside the ground. It's not nice to see but you can empathise with the fans, but they've got a lot more to look forward to now.

"The team's working incredibly hard. The self-belief's there and we're looking to win every game we go into. It's important for us to keep the momentum going. It's more important for us to approach the game like any other game. We will approach it exactly the same way we approached Kilmarnock on Sunday, and make sure the performance and work ethic is there, and the game will take care of itself. If we were to get tied up in the revenge theory, it's never good to go into a game with a negative thought process like that.

"You play opponents that many times; you are bound to lose along the way. You would be forever running around trying to

get revenge on people. That's no good. We have got some real good positives to focus on and that's what we will be doing. The joy of winning is much stronger than the fear of losing. That's something we are now developing. We are developing a momentum and a self-belief and confidence within that, and I think it's important that we carry that on. The boys have shown a real togetherness and team spirit in the last seven games and it's important we don't forget what we have done right.

"Obviously we understand the importance to the fans of a derby. We don't miss that at all, of course we understand that. We are looking to send people away happy and with a real belief that the tides have changed at Hibs. We probably were in a position at the start of the season where our games were decided by one goal. So if we went behind, the belief wasn't really there that we could come back and win, although we did at Kilmarnock.

"Whereas now the belief is there that 90 minutes is a long time in football and if we have any setbacks we have the personnel to deal with that and turn the game around."

Williams also believes that the recent acquisition of sports language and behavioural strategist David Yeoman can only have a positive effect on the team.

He continued: "The manager is a very positive person and he's keen to get across the importance of psychology in football. It plays a massive part. It doesn't have to work for everybody. For the few that it does, though, it only takes minor improvements for each individual and then the collective group can take a giant step forward. It's all about having the confidence to enjoy the game, express yourself and get the best out of yourself as a player.

"Goalkeeper is a specialist position and you are under an immense amount of pressure. If you make a mistake, it's a

goal. I've had to develop a thick skin, a mental strength to deal with any negatives so I buy into the value of positive thinking and having a positive mentality.

"Footballers thrive on confidence and self-belief. The best players in the world have that in abundance and are able to go out and express that."

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