

# Billy Brown Leaves Hearts



Hearts have announced that assistant manager Billy Brown is to leave the club. Brown, 63, is in his third spell at Tynecastle having assisted previous manager and close friend Jim Jefferies on two previous occasions.

Hearts announced the decision on their official website, stating 'a need to maintain financial prudence, therefore a reduction in football costs was required.'

A club spokesperson said: "We would like to put on record our gratitude to Billy for his sterling efforts in helping Gary since his arrival in July. He has been of considerable assistance to Hearts over the last six months and we know he appreciates the need to refresh the team coupled with the need for continued financial prudence. We wish him well in the future."

Brown had volunteered his services at the beginning of the season, having left the manager's post at East Fife at the end of last season. He then signed a short-term deal. Despite his obvious disappointment at not having his contract at Tynecastle extended, Brown urged the supporters to continue backing Gary Locke and the team, saying: "I am very disappointed my contract will not be renewed but that is the way things are at the club and I have to accept that.

"I was really pleased when I was asked to assist Gary at the start of the season. Having worked with Gary as a player over a great number of years I was always of the opinion that he had the making of a top manager and I've seen nothing to change my mind. The way he has handled a very difficult situation has been magnificent. I urge all supporters to get behind Gary and the team for the remainder of the season and would like to thank everybody who has helped me, especially

the players and staff whose spirit remains remarkable.”

Brown’s final appearance in the Hearts dugout will be for this weekend’s trip to St Johnstone in the SPFL Premiership. Hearts stated they would not be seeking a replacement which may well mean Under 21 coach Robbie Neilson assisting Locke with first team matters.

There is speculation that should Hearts sell youngster Adam King to FA Premiership side Swansea City – the Welsh side have reportedly offered £250,000 for the youngster – this would open the door for the return to Tynecastle of the prodigal son, Rudi Skacel. However, any such move would not be able to take place before 1 February and Czech born Skacel is presently considering an offer from his old friend and former Hearts playing partner Paul Hartley to play for Alloa Athletic.