

Butcher believes Harris' pace will frighten defenders



Although teenage winger Alex Harris is unlikely to start against St Mirren on Saturday, his performances on the training ground have convinced Terry Butcher that he could play up front in a similar role to Arsenal and England striker Theo Walcott.

Harris returned to the first team as a substitute against Aberdeen last Friday night after suffering an injury in the first game of the season, and the Hibs boss hopes that his pace will help the club climb the table.

Butcher said: "With Alex Harris coming back, it gives us options out wide, or even up front. Alex could be another Theo Walcott. Theo was always seen as a wide player, and still plays on the flank, but he always wants to come further forward and push through the middle. Pace scares defenders, and it's possible Alex could fill a role up front for us. Alex could play through the middle and I wouldn't rule that out. His pace will scare defenders.

"I feel there are goals in him, and, from what I have seen in training, if you put him through on the keeper then he invariably scores. That's a good sign."

"He has shown he can play out wide very well, but with pace he can get into other good areas and travel with and without the ball. He's still learning and still raw and still getting back to full sharpness, but we will look forward to the day that happens. There's a goal threat with Alex, and that's the point. We want to put him in positions where he can get one on one with the goalkeeper and he wants to get in those positions.

Meanwhile, the Easter Road boss insists that he won't be spending large sums of money in the transfer market although he remains hopeful that new faces will be joining the club and others will be leaving.

He continued: "We won't be buying players. I think I bought just one player at Inverness. That was Danny Williams for £5,000 from Chester. I don't spend a lot of money. I think at Motherwell I spent £3,000 on a goalkeeper, Colin Meldrum, to get him out of his contract at Forfar. That was big money for us, so I don't think I'll spend much money here either. I said to the chairman Rod Petrie that, if we are spending big money to bring a player in, that's money, we could use to bring in two or three free transfers.

"We will see. You never know. I could end up spending £75,000 on a player who is out of contract at the end of the season if we feel it is the right thing and Mr Petrie gives me the money."

"No-one is in or out at the moment. Sometimes it's a case of crossing people off your list more than adding to it or trying to secure players. A lot of clubs have done a lot of business but we're not aware of anything that is going to improve us, so, for now, we're keeping our powder dry, but that's not to say we won't be doing anything, because the last two weeks of a transfer window are normally the busiest period. Sometimes it's about waiting for the clubs down south to make their moves first, because that then frees them up to move on some of the guys not featuring much.

"You speak to clubs about players early on in January but they're not available. Then, three weeks later, they're back on asking if we're still interested. I call it the dominoes world championships. When someone signs for a club, it frees someone else up and it becomes a domino effect. We want to take part in the dominoes world championships ourselves and do a bit of business if we can."

Photo by John Preece

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