

Terry Butcher dismisses derby 'revenge' talk



Hibs boss Terry Butcher had dismissed all talk of revenge when Hibs take on neighbours Hearts in Thursday's New Years' derby.

The Gorgie youngsters have already beaten Hibs twice this season, the last time in front of a packed Easter Road, a result that saw the demise of Pat Fenlon, but Butcher insists that these games will have no bearing on tomorrow's clash.

Speaking ahead of the game, Butcher said: "The players have spoken about those games but they're history now, so there won't be any talk of revenge or 'this is our day' or anything like that.

"We'll be going out to win it, but half of our team didn't play in those two matches. It will be a different team which faces Hearts in terms of attitude, sharpness and confidence. We're buoyant going into this one."

"You see them now and they're confident enough to try things that make you go: 'Wow!' "They weren't doing those things before. So we're progressing."

"When I watched Inverness win at Easter Road on that infamous day when I was in limbo, there was a lot of power in that Caley team. On Sunday, there was a lot of power in the Hibs team and a lot of steel, too.

"So we've come a long way in a short space of time but there's still a long way to go. We didn't quite know what was here when we took over but, since getting in, we've realised that there are some really good players at this club. They are now starting to express themselves better, which comes from having

confidence and knowing what they are supposed to be doing.

“I don’t think there is softness about Hibs now – five clean sheets out of seven games is pretty good. And it’s not as though the boys are flying into tackles or being over-physical because we haven’t had many bookings recently – only two in the last three.

The former England captain also revealed that left back Callum Booth who is currently on a season long loan to Raith Rovers is still very much in his plans having watched him play against Livingston last weekend.

“We play Raith Rovers in the Scottish Cup plus one of our players [Callum Booth] plays for Raith Rovers so that is why we were there watching the game.

“It was a good chance to watch Callum play and I spoke to Callum as well just to say we are watching him and were looking forward to working with him.”

The news will be welcomed by the Hibs fans who had high hopes for the young defender who made his debut under Colin Calderwood, but fell out of favour during the Fenlon regime.

Meanwhile Lewis Stevenson who is enjoying a new lease of life under Butcher is looking forward to the game. He said: “The last derby, in fact both games against Hearts, could have gone totally differently. We’re still gutted about the last time.

“But we’re going into this game with a decent run of form and are confident that if we play well we’ll get a result.”

“We know it’s going to be tough. It doesn’t matter what the form is going into a derby – anything can happen and we’ll need to be at the top of our game to get a result.

“I’ve been on the other end as well, when Hearts have been expected to beat us, and we got a result. So you can never predict this match.

"We are desperate to win. We don't just owe the fans; we owe ourselves as we're gutted when we lose derbies.

"You feel for the supporters as they always come out and we just want to get a win over our big rivals, but this is just another game at the end of the day and we treat all matches the same – even the derbies.

"Hearts have got the better of us twice this season but hopefully we can change that. We're confident we can do well."

Stevenson recently made his 200th appearance for the club, the only player this century to do so in one spell, and on Sunday he scored only his second goal.

He continued: "The gaffer told me after the Killie game that I had more shots in 90 minutes than I had in my whole career. Even in training he's always encouraging us to shoot. A couple of days ago in training I scored probably the best goal of my life, so that gave me a bit of confidence.

"It was a volley. I don't think the boys were laughing like they laughed when I scored against Kilmarnock. They were a bit surprised. It was nice to get a goal. I didn't think it was coming but it was a great ball by James Collins. I had my hands up, thinking, 'He's doing well to see me,' but he put it right to my foot. It was a great pass and I just managed to squeeze it in the corner. I was lucky to get on the end of a few chances and was delighted to get that goal right at the end.

"I probably would have turned that chance down in the past and maybe would have passed the ball on, but I thought it was worth a go and managed to squeeze it in. I've been trying to play more positively as before I was always a bit worried about giving the ball away.

"But we've been encouraged to be more positive, get balls in the box and have more shots. It worked against both Kilmarnock

and Ross County.”