

Gary Locke looking forward to Celtic visit



Hearts' manager Gary Locke insists that he is looking forward to this weekend's visit from champions Celtic, despite that result that last time they played in Gorgie when they scored seven goals without reply.

With the league title all but wrapped up, the hoops have publically stated that they want to go through the season undefeated, and few expect them to drop even one point at Tynecastle.

Speaking at the weekly press conference at the Riccarton Training Centre, Locke said: "I think it's a game you've got to look forward to. It's a great one to be involved on whether you are a coach, manager or player. There will be a great atmosphere and a big crowd.

"There was a big improvement in the cup game when we went to Parkhead. Being the away team we could kind of sit back. It's always slightly different when you are the home team as you've got to try and have a go. We might have to change that a little bit. But it's one we're looking forward to. There's no real pressure on us – Celtic are undefeated in the league and have hardly conceded any goals.

"We're probably going into this game in a better frame of mind than we did for that one. I feel we've played well recently in the league. As I say, it's a difficult game. There's no doubt about that. They have great players – top internationals – but that should make it one to look forward to.

"After the game you don't think it's been beneficial but once you look back it is. I said at the start of the season that a

lot of people expected us to be on the end of one or two results like that. It certainly wasn't great at the time, but I think especially the younger players in the squad learn from games like that and the mistakes they made.

"They will know when they've not switched on against top players. When that happens, they punish you. That's what happened. We certainly can't afford to switch off at any stage because they have got players who, if you switch off for one second, they will punish you.

"You know they might well go the whole season undefeated. We don't know. But it would be nice to be the team that stops them. For that to happen, we know we'll have to be switched on for 90 minutes, for us to have a great day and for them to have an off day.

"We know that can happen. It's a big game everyone to be involved in and hopefully we can put in a performance."

With Callum Tapping likely to miss out due to injury, there was some good news for Locke with the return of influential midfielder Jason Holt who completed 90 minutes in the Under 20s defeat to St Mirren on Wednesday night. Holt's comeback is even more significant as he is one of the few players this season to score past Fraser Forster who is on the brink of beating Bobby Clark's 43 year record after going 12 consecutive league games without conceding.

Locke continued: "Jason played last night; he got through 90 minutes so we'll see how he is. I put him on the bench last week which really I shouldn't have done.

"That was through a lack of numbers. He'll be involved on Saturday, whether that's on the bench or not I don't know but hopefully he'll get some minutes on the pitch.

"There are not many players who have scored against Forster this season. That's why, for me, the pressure is off us a bit.

I think Celtic are strong favourites – everyone expects them to win. We can go and enjoy the game and if we play the way we have been the past month or so we can cause them problems.”