

Terry Butcher refutes Kevin Thomson bust up rumour



Terry Butcher has dismissed internet rumours of a training ground bust up between Kevin Thomson and Maurice Malpas and says that he is 'delighted' that the Scotland midfielder is determined to fight for a place in the team.

Speaking at the weekly press conference ahead of Saturday's Scottish cup tie against Raith Rovers the Hibs boss said: "He (Thomson) needs to get fit first. He has not been available to play since the St Johnstone game and has only featured in four out of my 12 games. He has to get fit and he has to get out there and get some time on the training field, first and foremost. The door is never closed, it is always open, and it is up to players then to push it wider."

"I think I have shown with Tom Taiwo that it is never say never," he added. "I will never say, 'You will never play for this football club again'. You might say things like 'game time will be limited because other players have come in and done well' but it is up to players like Kevin. If he is adamant that he wants to get back into the team, then I welcome it."



When specifically asked about the rumours of a rift, the Hibs boss responded: "What a load of guff," Kevin is a good professional and he loves this football club. He has had some great, great times at this football club, and who is to say there cannot be great times ahead? But he has to work hard and

get to the standard that I feel is right for the team, because there are some good players in his position who have done well. Can we put that to bed now?"

The talk then turned to Callum Booth, the Hibs' left back who is on a yearlong loan with Saturday's opponents after falling out of favour with Pat Fenlon. Unusually, no agreement was made at the time of the loan to prohibit Booth playing against Hibs so it is likely that he will feature in the game.

"It's a horrible one that, I must admit. There's been dialogue about it but he's played in the previous two rounds and he's played nearly all season for them anyway. It would be nice if Raith Rovers actually left him out of the team under these circumstances, but that's up to them," he added.

"He's got a bright future; I just hope he doesn't unleash a 30-yard thunderbolt like he did against me before. We'll certainly try our best to stop him. But it's difficult. The only loser in this situation will be him, in many aspects. But he's professional and he'll get on with his job and do well."

Butcher was referring to a goal scored by Booth in a 2-0 victory for Hibs over Inverness Caledonian Thistle two years ago; the he is looking forward to having him back in the green and white strip for pre-season training in the summer.

Apart from Ryan McGivern who is still recovering from an injury picked up against St Mirren and James McPake who is also on the road to recovery after a back operation, Butcher has a full squad to pick from which includes his three new loan signings.

Photo by John Preece

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