

# Terry Butcher admits that Hibs are not safe from relegation



Hibs' boss Terry Butcher has admitted that his side are not safe from relegation after yesterday's defeat to St Johnstone in Perth.

Before the game, all talk was of putting pressure on the Saints in an effort to reach the top six, but with that now impossible, the fans are looking over their shoulders at the teams below them hoping to avoid the dreaded play-off spot.

Thankfully for the Easter Road faithful, all the teams in the bottom half of the table lost, so Hibs remain seven points clear of St Mirren and five clear of both Partick Thistle and Ross County having played a game more.

After the game Butcher told BBC Scotland: "We certainly need more points, that's for sure, to make sure we do stay up.

"I never thought we'd say that when we first came here."

"We're in a position now where we've got to roll our sleeves up and work hard to get out of it and that starts on Sunday with Hearts"

"We certainly want to go there and enjoy the occasion because it will be a rip-roaring atmosphere and we've got to match Hearts and be better than them.

"I am confident they can do that as they've done it in the past.

"We've got a big match next week that we've got to pick

ourselves up for.”

Hibs started yesterday’s game brightly and dominated possession in the first half, but fell behind to a soft goal from a corner although Butcher was quick to praise stand in goalkeeper Sean Murdoch who deputised for Ben Williams who attended the birth of his child.

He continued: “We did really well in the first half in as much as St Johnstone changed their shape round to match ours, but, once again, it’s powder puff up front. We do ever so well to get up to the edge of the box and then we don’t create anything and the final ball’s poor and we don’t test Alan Mannus in goal.”

“Sean Murdoch had a fantastic match in goal. We got the text call in the morning from Ben Williams to say he was in hospital and they are going to break his wife’s waters.

“There’s only one place he should be and that’s with his wife, so Sean came in and did very well.”

Hibs go into next week’s derby with a number of injury problems as well as a suspension for on loan striker Danny Haynes who was sent off for an apparent stamp on former Hibs’ midfielder David Wotherspoon.

Butcher said: “Paul Hanlon’s got a knee problem, which could be cause for concern, and Duncan Watmore had a knock in training that forced three changes.

“We changed another three to change the system and I think the system worked initially.”

Photo by John Preece

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