

Hibs' pair excused Under 21 duty



Hibs' youngsters Sam Stanton and Danny Handling have been told not to join the Scotland Under 21 squad from the Netherlands match on Wednesday.

The pair were due to meet up with the rest of the squad for the European Championship qualifier, however manager Billy Stark believes that the 20-year-olds would not be in the right state of mind for the match at St Mirren Park.

Stark said: "The lads are in a state of shock. Some fans might think players don't care what happens, but they were distraught when I spoke to them last night.

"They felt humiliated and I just felt it would be very difficult for them to come here with a spring in their step and a smile on their face.

"The squad needs positivity around it so I made the decision with the lads' full backing that they should stay at home.

"I told them that if they thought the best thing for them would be to come here and get away from it all, then they were more than welcome, but they agreed with me that the state they were in, that would be difficult."

"I told them during my chat that as a good professional, you need to learn to deal with disappointment.

"I can't imagine they will have any greater disappointment than getting relegated with Hibs because it is a big club. No-one would have seen it coming three months ago.

"It's a shock but they will recover and it will not stunt

their development.”

Scotland sit fourth in Group Three, six points behind leaders Slovakia.

Photo by John Preece

<http://www.photoboxgallery.com/jlp-photography>