

# Sporting integrity at risk with SPFL decision to move Hearts v Rangers game



Hibs have been in contact with the SPFL regarding the decision to move the Hearts v Rangers game to from Saturday 2nd May to Sunday 3rd May.

This means that potentially Rangers could go to Tynecastle knowing exactly what they have to do to secure second place in the Championship, leaving Hibs at a disadvantage.

Should both clubs win their remaining games, Rangers will be two points behind Hibs and will have to win the game, however should Hibs draw one of their games, then Rangers could play for a draw against Hearts. Second place could also depend on goal difference which again would allow Rangers an advantage.

Hibernian FC's Chief Executive, Leeann Dempster said: "In previous seasons, the League has ensured that all of the final round fixtures are played at the same time.

"I have been in contact with the SPFL following its announcement that one final round fixture would kick off after all the other results are known. I have reminded them in very clear terms that – as the organiser of the competition – the responsibility for protecting its unimpeachable sporting integrity lies with them."

Ms Dempster received support from Hearts' owner Ann Budge who issued a statement on the club website: "When it also became apparent to us that our fixture was the only game to be moved, we were equally alarmed as, rightly or wrongly, this casts a shadow over the sporting integrity of the Championship.

“While it may not be enshrined in the newly merged rule book of the SPFL, it is protocol the football world over for fixtures such as the last day of the championship to be played simultaneously.

“To move only one (or even two or four) out of five fixtures would seem to be leaving our game wide open to unsavoury accusations.

“I will be sending in a formal complaint to the SPFL in relation to this appallingly late decision.”

An SPFL spokesman responded: “On this weekend, the Hearts v Rangers match is scheduled for Sunday 3 May to be broadcast on television and it is not clear to us why this has caused so much surprise,” he said.

“This is a key game in the Championship season and will inevitably attract huge interest from fans around the world.

“It is unreasonable to expect all Championship fixtures that weekend to move to the Sunday when a number of them will be unaffected by the Hearts v Rangers tie.

“However, as a result of this fixture, all Championship clubs have been invited to submit a request should they wish to move games to the Sunday.

“To date, the only feedback we have received is from one Championship club, which has asked for its match to remain scheduled for the Saturday.

“For the avoidance of doubt, we have had no request from Hibernian FC to move its fixture to the Sunday.”