

# Alan Stubbs aiming for automatic promotion next season



Hibs' Head Coach Alan Stubbs yesterday insisted that he has made progress since taking over at Easter Road last summer despite the fact that he was unable to guide the club to promotion at the first attempt.

After a brave performance against Rangers, the players were applauded off the pitch and a defiant Stubbs told a packed press conference. "Analyse the season from the day I walked in, to the last minute of the last game, and if you do that, I think you'll see that we have made progress.

"I'm not going to say we've done a brilliant job because that would be going up but I think we've done reasonably well. I think the fans appreciate that. You saw the reaction they gave the players at the end and the players haven't seen that for quite a bit. That's an indicator."

Stubbs will now spend the summer trying to persuade a number of his key players that their futures should be at Easter Road and if he is successful then he believes that automatic promotion will be the result. He added: "I think that the team's good enough. I want to try to take all these play-off games out of the equation and do it the way Hearts have done it this year. I honestly feel that if we can keep them together, we'll go up automatically next year. You know me, I'm not one for making predictions I don't believe in.

"I believe in these players, I think they're good enough and they've got their best years ahead of them and I'm quite excited by that. We just need to start again and hopefully do

what Hearts did by winning the league comfortably."

The result of this week's play-off final could have a bearing on Hibs' fate next season however. Should Motherwell overcome Rangers then Stubbs will have to a club with a much larger budget but that does not concern him.

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He concluded: " I think we've proved over the season we're capable of beating anyone. If Rangers are still in this division, it would be between us and them. But I'll relish the challenge. We'll see over the next week or so who it is, Motherwell or Rangers.

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&amp;amp;amp;lt;/a&amp;amp;gt;&amp;nbsp;&amp;amp;nbsp;&amp; “The fans are back with us, we have good management and that ambition hasn’t changed for me.”