

Tynecastle Sold Out Again as Hearts Play Down Title Talk

Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson has played down talk of Hearts mounting a challenge for the Ladbrokes Premiership League title and said his team are a long way off being considered serious contenders.

Former Tynecastle skipper Steven Pressley said earlier this week that he believes his former club can win the league. However, his former team-mate Neilson laughed off such talk.

"I think everyone wants someone to challenge Celtic. Aberdeen did it last year and I think they'll do the same again this year," Neilson explained at Hearts Media Conference. "It's good for Scottish football that we're talking about it.

I still think both Hearts and Aberdeen are some way off challenging over the long term, but we're moving in the right direction. The money coming in that Celtic have got is night and day compared to what we've got. If you drive a car that's worth £10,000 and someone else drives a car that's worth £200,000, who do you expect is going to win?

"We have to find different ways to try and compete, and we're doing that, by doing different things, looking at different players. It's always going to be difficult, and I don't see it changing at all just because of the stature of the club. It's very difficult to compete on the same financial footing."

Neilson was delighted that five Hearts players have been named in the Scotland Under-21 squad for next month's 2017 European Championship qualifier in Lurgan.

Jack Hamilton, Jordan McGhee, Callum Paterson, Sam Nicholson and Billy King make the 22-man squad to face Northern Ireland on Saturday 5 September.

Meanwhile, Hearts have announced that Saturday's Ladbrokes Premiership game with Partick Thistle at Tynecastle is now a sell-out. Hearts previous two league games in Gorgie, against St. Johnstone and Motherwell, were also sell-outs indicating the huge amount of interest in the league leaders this season.