

Hearts Must Learn to Walk Before They Can Run



Hearts Head Coach Robbie Neilson was ruefully reflecting on his side's second league defeat of the season following the 2-0 reversal in Inverness on Friday evening.

After a blistering start to their Ladbrokes Premiership campaign, Hearts tonight sit third in the league, three points behind leaders Aberdeen – who visit Gorgie next Sunday.

However, Neilson believes the Maroon Army – some of whom were quick to criticise their team's performance in the Highlands – should perhaps reflect on where the club were just a few months ago.

“We're a Championship team who were promoted in the summer,” Neilson told the official Hearts website. “Yes, we've had a great start to the season but our priority is to get in the top six. That's what we want.

“We were playing on Friday night against a team that finished third in the league and won the Scottish Cup, at home, and they're a decent team. We can't expect just to turn up here and pick up three points. We have to come up here and compete and work really hard.

“Sometimes you need the rub of the green to get a victory up here. It's been a long time since a Hearts team has won here. We have to be realistic about where we are and we don't get carried away.”

“In the top league you have to compete in every game,” Neilson went on. “You have to compete and earn the right to win the game, and I just didn't think we did that. We didn't pass it

as well as we can but that came from not thinking enough to try and get into good areas.

“It’s such a hard league, especially when you get promoted and bring in a lot of new guys and a lot of young guys.”

Hearts are, perhaps, victims of their own success following their room to the Championship last season. If, at the start of the season, someone had suggested Hearts would be third in the league after seven games, it’s fair to say the majority of Hearts supporters would have accepted it. The defeats from Hamilton Academical and Inverness Caledonian Thistle will have brought unrealistic expectations down a peg or two and that’s no bad thing. Perhaps people who should really know better – step forward former Hearts captain Steven Pressley and current full back Juwon Oshaniwa – will give serious thought before expressing views that Hearts can win the league. The team must first learn to walk before it can run.

Neilson is certain to make changes for the visit of the Dons next weekend and the Maroons will hope to preserve their 100% home record in what promises to be the game of the weekend in Scotland.