

“Tough draw but not insurmountable” says Neil Lennon



Neil Lennon will face a tough start to his Hibs career following yesterday's Europa League draw in Switzerland.

Hibs will enter the second qualification round after winning the Scottish Cup, and have been paired with the winner of the first qualifying match between Valur Reykjavik and Brondby IF.

Valur were the first team to qualify for this year's UEFA club competition after winning the Icelandic Cup back in August 2015, and currently sit eighth in the Icelandic Premier League having won three of their opening eight games.

Brondby IF are one of the biggest sides in Denmark and finished fourth in last year's Superliga. Their current squad includes former Celtic striker Teemu Pukki, who played under Lennon at Celtic, and ex West Brom defender Martin Albrechsten.

New Head Coach Neil Lennon told the club website: “It's a tough draw but not insurmountable – historically teams from the likes of Denmark and Iceland are well prepared for the earlier European ties given they've often already kicked off their league season.

“We'll do our homework on both sides and be prepared for whoever wins the first round tie. Obviously Brondby are a well-known name but I'm sure both sides will prove to be difficult.

“We don't have a preference over who we play so we'll watch the games with interest and be ready for the next round.

“The players are back for pre-season training later this week and I’m sure everyone will be excited to have this match to look forward to.”

“There will be tremendous excitement amongst the fans too, and if we play the home tie first I’m sure we’ll get a great turnout.

“The supporters are massively important for these types of games and it would be a big boost to the players to have Easter Road full.”

Hibs are expected to play at home in the first leg (Thursday 14th July), with the return leg scheduled for Thursday 21 July, though dates and locations are subject to final UEFA confirmation and may change.