

Neil Lennon 'delighted' for Paul Hanlon after Scotland call-up



Neil Lennon is delighted that defender Paul Hanlon has been called up to the Scotland squad for the Challenge match against the Netherlands next month.

The Northern Irishman believes that playing in the Championship for the past three years may have affected his chances but he is now showing his qualities in the top flight.

Interim boss Malky Mackay saw at first hand Hanlon's ability during the Edinburgh derby win at Easter Road last week but Lennon insists that his performances have been excellent all season.

Lennon said: "I'm very pleased. I am delighted for him. It's testament on how he has been playing this season. he has been really consistent and I think it's overdue although he has been plying his trade in the Scottish Championship he has all the qualities at 27 to take his career on and this is obviously a forward step for him.

"I think everyone associated with the club, particularly the dressing room and the background staff are really pleased for him.

"He is a little bit different to what's available and he has really good pace. Looking at him physically you wouldn't think that he is a dominant type but the last few months his aerial prowess has been fantastic. His timing and defending at set plays and that sort of thing, his physicality has been excellent.

“Allied to that he is quick and well balanced. His handling of the ball ticks a lot of boxes for Scotland.

“His competition for Scotland are Christophe (Berra) and Charlie (Mulgrew) and Paul is a left sided centre half to accompany those two.

“Over the last year you have not seen too many defensive problems for Scotland so for Paul to be called up, it’s great news for him.”

Joining Hanlon in the squad is midfielder John McGinn, who was a regular in Gordon Strachan’s sides over the past 18 months, winning four caps in that period and former team mate Jason Cummings who left the club in the summer for Nottingham Forest.

The game against the Dutch will be played in Aberdeen on Thursday 9 November and will kick-off at 7:45pm.