

Neil Lennon says that refereeing inconsistencies 'bug' him following game changing decisions



Hibs' Head Coach Neil Lennon says that refereeing inconsistencies are 'bugging' him after being on the wrong end of some game changing decisions and seeing international midfielder John McGinn subjected to some coarse treatment this season.

The Northern Irishman pointed out two challenges in particular from Hearts' youngster Harry Cochrane and St Johnstone midfielder as being 'unacceptable.'

Lennon knows Hibs are in a good position going into the business end of the season, but wants to focus on the challenge of the next three games before contemplating the post-split fixtures.

He also gave updates on the fitness of Dylan McGeouch and Marvin Bartley, and discussed his thoughts on John McGinn's performance for Scotland.

Speaking at Thursday's pre-match press conference, the Head Coach said: "This season we have pointed out four or five game changing decisions and it is the inconsistency that is bugging me more than anything else.

"It's the coarseness of the tackling that has upset me. I don't mind shoulder charges, I don't mind 50-50s but the lateness and the off the ball stuff and the amount of fouls against my team week in week out, it's almost up in the 20s most weeks. I think we are the most fouled team in the league now.

"John's (McGinn) has had two now, the (Harry) Cochrane one and the (Blair (Alston) one and for me they are unacceptable in the game. They are not tackles, they are just kicking a player off the ball to stop them from progressing.

"John was pretty fortunate to go away with Scotland after the treatment he got on that Friday night.

"He is in brilliant form and a great profile for the club and I am delighted for him as an individual.

"While he is here we just want to get the best out of him and for him to enjoy and be happy here.

"We've had an offer for him before and it was nowhere near the club's valuation and if he stays another year I will be absolutely delighted.

"Dylan (McGeouch) is over his injury. It's been over a week. It was just the timing of it that was really disappointing for him. He is still very much in the manager's (Alex McLeish) thoughts and hopefully he can keep replicating the form that he has shown this season and be part of the trip that goes to

South America.

“As for Saturday, we will assess how he is on Friday.

“His contract talks are still up in the air which is his right. The talks are not ongoing at the minute but I wouldn't say it's reached a stand off either. It's still very open to debate as to whether he will be here next season.

“Whittaker is fully fit now, Bartley had a bit of a virus but he trained today (Thursday) and Ofir (Marciano) and John (McGinn) are both suspended but we should have enough to compensate for that.

“I'm not looking too far ahead – we're trying to negotiate these next three games.

“I think they're really important – we're playing three of the bottom four and they're going to be very difficult, because they're fighting for their lives.

“Post-split will take care of itself, motivation wise and incentive wise, but these three games are very important to how we finish before the split comes, very important.

“We will probably go into all three games as favourites and we've earned the right given our league position and our form since the turn of the year.

“We know what is at stake over the next couple of weeks before the split.”