

Leeann Dempster backs Neil Lennon after claims he 'goaded' Hearts fans



Hibs' chief executive Leeann Dempster has backed Head Coach Neil Lennon after the Northern Irishman was struck on the face by a coin thrown from Hearts' Main Stand last night.

Lennon celebrated the decision to disallow a late 'goal' and motioned for the Hearts' fans to calm down before a pound coin hit him on the chin resulting in him requiring medical attention.

Many on social media and a few media pundits slammed Lennon for 'goaded' the home supporters but Ms Dempster insisted that Lennon did not deserve to be assaulted irrespective of his actions.

She also insisted that she will deal with any trouble makers amongst the Hibs' supporters if they can be identified in the 'strongest possible terms.'

Speaking this morning to Jim White on Talksport, Ms Dempster said: "Irrespective of what a manager does trackside he does not deserve to be hit by an object.

"If any manager's antics go beyond the realms of what is acceptable then that will be dealt with properly.

"Guys remember, we are in the entertainment business here as well.

"And I'm sorry, I don't support anybody who says that a manager having an interaction with supporters in that manner deserves to be hit by an object."

Jim White put it to Ms Dempster that entertainment is not about goading the opposition fans, and she responded: "Well I am going to disagree with you because I don't think that's what he was doing.

"I think you just have to look at the circumstances. Neil said it last night.

"We know what the interaction is like for him when he goes to and he's human like everybody else, I don't think we should forget that.

"We need to first of all speak to the police, identify who they are and take the necessary action.

"The clubs do not have the power to make football banning orders in Scotland, that's not an issue for us but what we can do is to stop supporters visiting our grounds and that's exactly what we will do.

"Let's be honest, the vast majority of the 19,500 people behaved themselves very well in a wonderful atmosphere, a great game of football in terms of a derby game.

"So we want to punish every other person in the ground and other supporters and the teams because we have two or three

individuals who do not know how to behave themselves? I don't think that's a reasonable position.

"But let's say the clubs, myself and the chief executive of Hearts will deal with these supporters if they can be identified and in the strongest possible terms.

"We will also remind people that you cannot come to a football match. You do not deserve to come to a football match if you are going to behave in this way."