

Hibs' players feel guilty over Heckingbottom sacking

Hibs' midfielder Stevie Mallan has claimed that the Hibs' players "feel guilty" over the sacking of former head coach Paul Heckingbottom.



Ladbrokes Scottish Premiership – Hibernian v Hearts. Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK. 22/09/2019. Pic shows: as Hibs play host to city rivals Hearts at Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh. Credit: Ian Jacobs

The Yorkshireman only won one league game this season, on the opening day against St Mirren and a derby defeat at Easter Road resulted in supporters calling for his head.

Despite reaching the semi-final of the Betfred League Cup, the Hibs' Board reacted to the fans' concerns and both

Heckingbottom and his assistant Robbie Stockdale were dismissed.

Eddie May took over along with Grant Murray and Steven Whittaker and the players produced their best performance of the season, recording a 4-1 win over St Johnstone in Perth.

Mallan told BBC Scotland: "Every player felt guilty and still does. A man lost his job and we were part of that – not just the manager.

"The manager can put out any tactics and any team, but first and foremost it's up to the players to perform on the park and we were the ones who weren't performing.

"You try your hardest but unfortunately it just didn't work out.

"We were working hard, it was just the results weren't coming our way and we were just hoping for a game that just flipped it

"The game that happened ended up being St Johnstone – when Eddie (May) took over – so that makes you feel even worse.

"It was the same players, the same kind of team we put out under the previous manager. You just wish you'd done that for him, because if we did he might still be in the job."

Mallan previously played under Heckingbottom's replacement Jack Ross at St Mirren and he believes that the Hibs' board has made the correct decision.

Ross takes charge for the first time today when Motherwell visit Easter Road.

Mallan continued: "When it came up that he was getting the job, I felt it was going to be the right choice.

"I thought it would be a no-brainer and now that he's here I'm delighted. When he came in at St Mirren he lifted everyone's spirits.

"The boys who hardly played at St Mirren still loved coming in to train, even the boys who were substitutes most weeks renewed their contracts. He was just an enjoyable manager to play for."