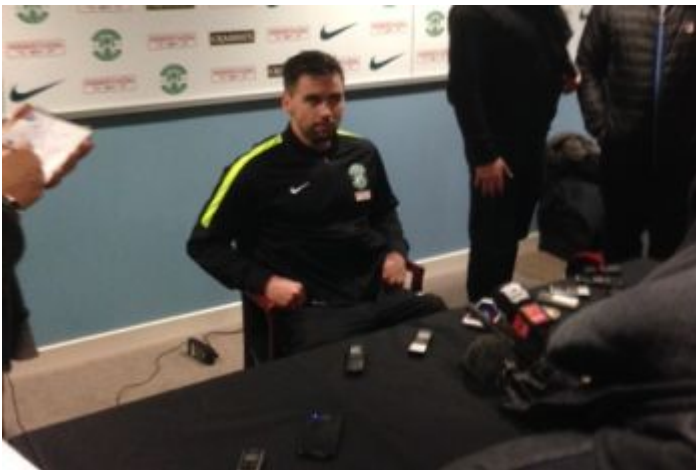


# Darren McGregor in contention for Rangers visit

Hibs' defender Darren McGregor has worked tirelessly to regain his fitness and is now back in contention for a place in the starting line-up for Friday night's visit of Rangers to Easter Road.



McGregor who previously played for Rangers and won the fans' Player of the Year' award before moving to his boyhood idols praised the club's Physio Department for their advice and help over the past few months.

Having recently signed a new four-year contract, McGregor insists that he will play as long as his body allows.

Speaking at the pre-match press conference McGregor said: "I've been back training for close to four weeks and I feel good. It's been a long, arduous journey, probably a lot longer than I expected.

"Initially I was only expecting to be out for a couple of weeks but it seemed to grow arms and legs and it was a deep, ingrained muscle injury in my groin area.

"It's good to finally get over it. I need to thank the physio department. I could have gone down the route of surgery at one point but thankfully they were patient, stuck with me and now I'm back feeling as strong as I did before.

"A lot of people might have jumped into saying I needed an operation, but our head of sports science Nathan Ring did have a conversation with me and say if the op didn't work it could be the end of my career.

"It was a pretty frank discussion, but I took it on the chin and decided to do it the right way. It was sheer perseverance and hard work for 14 weeks building up my core, my gluts and my abductors and thankfully I've got over it.

"Now I just want to keep going until my body says no. I'm not one of these guys who'll decide to jack it in because my need is bad. I'll keep going until it's physically impossible to play. You might think that's silly but I love the game."

McGregor will not have to face 27-goal Alfredo Morelos, who is banned after being sent off last Sunday but instead will be up against Jermain Defoe who scored a hat-trick the last time the teams met at Ibrox.

He continued: "It's the lesser of two evils. Which one do you want to face? Jermain Defoe who has played in the top league in England for years and years, who has everything you want in a striker

– quick,  
intelligent, strong and can finish?

“Or do you want Morelos who ticks all those boxes with a wee bit more brute force?

“I’ve been so impressed by him. There were mutterings of him being worth £10million a few years ago and I questioned that a bit.

“But now you could double or treble that. He’s shown he can score in Europe too.

“We’re under no illusions it will be difficult because Rangers are really strong no matter who they play up front.”