

# Quick fix is exactly what Hearts need

**Hearts captain Christophe Berra believes his team's fortunes aren't going to change overnight.**

Speaking to BBC Scotland, the 34 year-old former Scotland defender said while there were improvements in the Gorgie men's performance in the 2-0 defeat from league champions Celtic on Wednesday evening, there was still much hard work to be done from new manager Daniel Stendel and his new charges to lift the team from the lower echelons of the Ladbrokes Premiership table.

"Let's be honest," said the Hearts skipper, "It's not going to be a quick fix. The new gaffer just wants everybody to be a bit more aggressive when we're closing down, take more risks and, when we get the ball just play, don't be scared."

"Sometimes we'll get caught, but he's not so fussed if you give the ball away sometimes,"

"He's very demanding at the same time, but he knows you're

going to  
give the ball away sometimes when you take risks. And we will  
be prone to  
giving up chances as well if you're going to play like that."



Hearts veteran striker Steven MacLean. Photo: Thomas Brown  
Berra's assertion that Stendel will need time to get his ideas  
and  
methods across to the players can't be disputed but with  
Hearts travelling to  
bottom of the table Hamilton Academical on Saturday a quick

fix is exactly what Hearts need. The players are clearly lacking in confidence but it's the classic Catch-22 scenario – only improved results will bring the confidence needed.

Stendel's hard-pressing game is a style many of the Hearts players should be familiar and confident with. But it's understandable that the new manager, having just been in post for a little over a week, doesn't yet know his strongest team. Stendel said after the hapless performance against St Johnstone last weekend that performances would improve once the 'big' players such as Steven Naismith, John Souttar and Conor Washington returned from injury. However, Stendel has the unenviable task of trying to get results with those available players shorn of confidence.

It was a sign of the troubled times Hearts are in that beleaguered supporters were hoping Celtic didn't score a third goal at Tynecastle on Wednesday evening as this would have dropped their team to the bottom of the league by nature of alphabetical order. The fact their defeat was only by two goals meant Hearts still hover over the Premiership basement trap door. Defeat at Hamilton on Saturday will push them through it and mean they will be stranded there with games against Hibernian and Aberdeen at Tynecastle looming large.



Hearts in Ladbrokes Premiership action against Celtic at Tynecastle on Wednesday evening. Photo: Thomas Brown

If a Hearts team that hasn't won in six league games can contrive to pull off a victory in Lanarkshire and improve their league position by the winter break then the Maroon Army will be permitted a smidgeon of optimism as they welcome 2020 and the possibility of Stendel bring in the calvary in the form of new signings and players returning from injury.

It's become something of a football cliché to say teams may have to win 'ugly'



when they're in trouble, but Hearts will surely take a one-goal victory in Hamilton by the ugliest means possible to keep the very real threat of relegation at bay. Stendel admitted as much when he told the official Hearts website:

"The big goal for tomorrow is that we win the game.

"It doesn't matter if we play our best game or we fight or it's a scrappy game, it's a difficult game and we need to invest it all so that we can win this game.

"I expect a hard game for us and a close game, especially with my experience from the St Johnstone game.

"It's special, the situation for both clubs. We need the right mentality to play this game and I expect that we play better than last Saturday.

"This is important in every game, with more ideas to play in possession because I think we will have more of the ball than we did against Celtic.

"We need to expect a hard fight and have the right mentality for this game tomorrow.

"Normally games between teams at the bottom of the table are about fighting for every point. The goal from us is to take the three points to Edinburgh."



Hearts new manager Daniel Stendel. Photo: Thomas Brown  
Jamie Brandon will miss out having been taken off injured  
against Celtic  
and captain Christophe Berra is suspended but there could be  
welcome returns  
for Steven Naismith and Uche Ikpeazu.

For those Hearts supporters brave enough to travel to the  
Fountain of  
Youth Stadium on Saturday – the irony of the name of Hamilton  
Accies' ground won't  
be lost given they may well age considerably by the time  
4.45pm comes around – a  
cash gate will be in operation from 2pm.

Read The Edinburgh Reporter's match report on Saturday  
evening.