

Hearts – update on Ben Woodburn transfer

After leaving Parkhead having lost by a single goal, Hearts have to dust themselves down, for the full-scale return of their passionate supporters and Stephen Glass' Aberdeen on Sunday.

Realistically, Hearts couldn't have asked for many better circumstances in which to respond to the criticism they received for their first half showing against Celtic on Sunday.

Hearts went down 3-2, but the stats showed they were fortunate not to be four or five goals down in the first half alone.

Manager Robbie Neilson came under fierce criticism for the way he set his side up in the East End of Glasgow, and the Hearts boss now turns his attentions to making amends against the Dons.

"You are going to lose games," he said. "You go to Celtic Park and lose 3-2 and you are obviously disappointed, but you have to try and learn from it and go and win the next game. That's all you can do.

"We knew going into the game we had a few injuries and didn't have a full squad to pick from, so there was an idea we would have a game plan to try and get a result.

"First-half we had to change it and second-half we managed to

do that with a better foothold in the game. But it's done."

After a slow start in the transfer window, Hearts are finally making some big moves. Liverpool midfielder Ben Woodburn is the latest player to be in talks to join the Tynecastle club.

"We are still negotiating with them and trying to get something done", Neilson explained.

"He's keen to come and we're keen to get him, but he's a Liverpool player at the moment, so we need to wait for them to make a decision.

"He's a player we have been watching for a while now and we are trying to get in, but the deal is not done, so we just have to wait and see.

"Joe will decide on that side of it in terms about who comes in and what the length of the deal is or anything, but it's very early stages.

"We have made contact and it's just a case of getting it done."



Scottish Championship – Heart of Midlothian v Raith Rovers. Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK. 23/01/2021 Hearts play host to Raith Rovers in the Scottish Championship at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh. Pic shows: An animated Hearts' manager, Robbie Neilson, shouts instructions to his team from the sidelines. Credit: Ian Jacobs

Hearts versus Aberdeen is always a big game on the fixture calendar with the Dons fans often bringing down a good support to contribute to the already impressive Tynecastle atmosphere.

This time the atmosphere should be even louder than normal, with Hearts allowed to welcome back all their 12,500+ season ticket holders for the first time since March 2020."

“Our focus right now is on Aberdeen and making sure we beat them”, Neilson admitted.

“It’s a big game for us. You think Hibs, Rangers, Celtic and Aberdeen are the games you look for, especially the home games.

“Hopefully we’ll have a full house for it, and it will be brilliant just getting the fans back in and the atmosphere.

“If we want to be where we want to be, we need to beat Celtic, like we did at home. To beat Aberdeen at home. Rangers and Hibs.

“The objective for us is top six and trying to get into Europe. Hearts should be consistently in there. Scotland had five teams in this year, and we see ourselves trying to get into it, but it’s easier said than done. You have to prove it.”

Aberdeen will arrive fresh off the back of their long European trip to play FK Qarabag of Azerbaijan, but Neilson isn’t certain that the Dons travel arrangements will work in Hearts’ favour.

“It’s difficult to tell. I’ve done long trips before, and you can come back, and you are flying, or you are coming back, and it doesn’t work out for you. We’ll see on Sunday.

Hearts have started the league campaign well, winning both of their fixtures by a 2-1 score-line and when asked if Hearts were ahead of where they thought they’d be at this stage, Neilson explained:

“Speaking to the boys at the beginning of the season, we have an objective of where we want to get to, but the main objective is to win every week. I think you have to do that.

“We’ve managed to do it quite consistently this season, but this is another challenge against Aberdeen.

“They have a very big squad and a strong squad when you look at it. Look at the bench and it is full of good players. Us at the moment, the first 13 or 14 players we’ve got, but we need to add a wee bit more.”