

Hearts – Haring returns to fitness

After a frustrating spell on the sidelines with a pelvic injury and limited game-time in the Championship last season, Peter Haring appears to be coming back on to form following impressive displays against Dundee United and Hibernian.

Haring quickly became a fans favourite during the 2018/19 campaign after signing from SV Ried and the injury he suffered, appeared to difficult to treat, various specialists were required on his road to recovery.

Now Haring is getting his fitness levels up and is enjoying a midfield partnership alongside Beni Baniyime, however the Austrian insists there's still plenty of room for improvement.

“There's plenty of room for improvement I'd say. Especially in the last two games, we're getting more confident and better. I'm enjoying it.

“The most important thing to me is to get into a rhythm and you only get there with games. If you have quality as a player that doesn't change after an injury, but you only get that confidence back when you have minutes in your legs. I'm getting that at the moment.

“I'm glad to play all those minutes in the last few weeks and

the most important thing is the team is doing well then you can start enjoying your game again.”

Beni Banningime has received plenty of plaudits since joining on a permanent deal from Everton, and Haring explains it’s a joy to play alongside him.

“It’s good. He’s a very intelligent player who understands the game really well and makes it easy to play with him. He’s not the most vocal player, he’s quite calm and relaxed but he’s usually in the right position and you don’t need to worry too much about him.”

Hearts started the 2018/19 campaign strongly, before eventually finishing in a low-key sixth place and when asked about the difference between the current side and the one of three years ago, Haring said:

“They’re very different. The year I came in we started really well but we hardly knew each other because there were 16 new signings. Loads of the boys coming in didn’t know the league very well, which was good at the start, because we didn’t think too much, and we just went out and played.

“When you’re new at the club you don’t feel the pressure from outside so much. I think that helped in our first season. Now we have a team that knows the league very well, that has been playing here for a few years.

“The team this year is more experienced and mature. The year I came three years ago we didn’t end the season well enough after such a great start. I’m confident that won’t happen again.”

Hearts are unbeaten in their opening five league fixtures and are currently only a point behind league leaders Rangers. Haring praised his manager for the mentality he’s installed at the club.

“Neilson’s been in for over a year and you can see how he wants his team to play. He deserves credit for that, he brought us back to the Premiership straight away which everyone expected but it’s still an achievement. He always drives us to never be satisfied with anything and to just carry on, so he deserves praise for that.”

Haring added that Neilson’s style of play has also helped improve his own game:

“Definitely. He wants us to play football and I want to play football, so there are similarities.”

The midfielder’s contract at Tynecastle expires next summer and he confirmed that no talks have started at this point with regards to a deal to keep him at Tynecastle beyond then, but admitted he is loving life in Edinburgh.

“I have not thought about that,” Haring said.

“The last two years I was just making sure I was coming back to play football again and then performing. There is still a long season to go, and I’m fully focused on that.

“There’s been no talks yet. But there’s so many games left this season and I still think I can do better than I have so far.

“I really enjoy Edinburgh, especially this year with the weather being so good – I can’t believe this is Scotland right now! The country is open for travelling too so last weekend was my first since before covid that my family has been over and that makes life much easier and more enjoyable.”

With his injury troubles on top of Hearts’ demotion, Haring admitted he feels a special love towards the Jambos and explained he is very happy at Hearts.

“It’s the club I have been the longest at through my whole career. I really feel part of it. Going through everything I

have in the last few years – first of all with my injuries and then relegation and getting back up – means there’s an emotional connection with the club.

“I have enjoyed every single day of being part of it. It’s a great club to be at and work at. I’m really happy to be here. We will see what the future brings.”

Aaron McEneff and Jamie Walker missed out on the matchday squad for last weekend’s Edinburgh derby, which shows how much strength-in-depth Hearts now have at their disposal and Haring explained this leads to a high standard of training.

“The standard in training is really good. We had a small squad at the start of pre-season and had loads of the young boys in. But now with all the signings you can tell that if you’re not on it in training then it’s going to be tough for you. You need to be at it every day to make sure you can perform. The standard is really high.”

Ross County v Hearts

Hearts travelled to Dingwall on Saturday looking to make it nine points out of nine on the road and Haring admitted Hearts must go into these games with the same mentality they would a derby, or a match with the old firm.

“I don’t think we have struggled against lesser teams this year, especially away we have been dominant,” he said.

“When you don’t score like against Dundee United and St Mirren when we had loads of chances then it can be scrappy, but if we can take our chances then it will be better on the eye and more comfortable.

“The next two games are massive. Ross County and then home to Livingston. They won’t be any easier than the last few games.

“When you play Celtic or Hibs you know everyone is going to be

at it, on fire and really wanting to win. We have to make sure it's the same mentality this weekend then I'm confident we will win the game."

Hearts drew 2-2 with Ross County on Saturday. Coach, Robbie Neilson, said he was pleased but also frustrated overall. He said: "

"I thought we actually played really well in periods and moved it well. We got into some really good areas and probably should have scored more goals.

"But we lost two scrappy goals in the first half. We knew with Jordan White up front they would go direct and would get second balls.

"We lost two and that was the most frustrating thing.

"I was pleased we managed to fight back and get back to 2-2 and we were the team in the ascendancy to go and try to win it.

"We like to try and win every game, but we couldn't quite do it today.

"The team talk certainly changed a wee bit at half-time, going behind. I just thought they were poor goals to lose. The first one, it goes up and it is a second ball. We don't press at the edge of the box. Their boy gets a great strike.

"The next one is basically just a flick-on to the runner and a cutback.

"I didn't feel they had to work hard to get the goal, whereas we had to get ourselves into really good areas to score."



Scottish Championship – Heart of Midlothian v Dundee. Tynecastle Park 06/3/2021 Hearts play host to Dundee in the Scottish Championship at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh. Pic

shows: Match referee, Don Robertson, shows the red card to Hearts' Austrian Defensive midfielder, Peter Haring, in the closing minutes for violent conduct. Credit: Ian Jacobs