

Neilson talks about Walter Smith

Following the tragic news that former Rangers and Scotland manager Walter Smith had died aged 73, tributes poured in for the man who won a total of 21 trophies at Rangers.

Hearts manager Robbie Neilson was given his one and only Scotland cap by Smith and said, "he'll always be grateful for that."

"It's really sad news to hear and it's come as a bit of a shock. Walter was absolutely brilliant for me. He was one of the few giants of Scottish football, I would say. No matter what team you were affiliated to or supported, you respected Walter and it's a sad day for everyone in Scottish football," he added.

"For me, it's an honour to play for your country and he's the guy who gave me that opportunity. I'll always be grateful for that. He was straight to the point.

"I had a lot of time for Walter. He was a brilliant guy and straight down the middle, and whenever you met him he would always give you time as well.

"He was a giant of Scottish football and I'm sure he'll get the respect that he deserves.

"I would see him at some of the Dumbarton games when I went

down there in the Championship. He was good to speak to. He would blether away about things, about football and different things.

“He would always have time for you. It was just blethering. You know what it’s like, managers speak to each other and have a chat about things. It was just nice that Walter was there for you to talk to.

“I’m very friendly with Alex Smith from my time at Falkirk and the two of them were very tight, so I could speak to Walter through him, and the two of them have been great through my career.

“Walter did a lot of work with the Pro Licence as well so he would speak to a group of 10 or 15 managers.

“Everyone got to know him, and he would keep in contact. And when you met him out and about you could speak to him. He’s had a massive influence on the game. If you look at his record, it’s phenomenal. The clubs he’s been at, whether it’s as assistant or manager, probably out with Sir Alex Ferguson and Jock Stein, he’s one of the best Scotland’s ever had.”