

On his return to Hearts Tony Sibbick is sure this is the right move

Often when English players cross the border for a taste of Scottish football they do not know very much about the club they are joining.

But that was not the case for Hearts player Toby Sibbick, who admitted after agreeing a three-and-a-half-year deal in January, that it was always in his mind to return to Edinburgh.

Sibbick was first signed by former Hearts manager, Daniel Stendel in January 2020 and despite only playing two games, he impressed the Jambos faithful.

That season ended prematurely due to the Covid pandemic and Hearts were demoted to the Championship. Now things are very different at Tynecastle, Hearts have sealed third place in the table and have now booked their place in May's Scottish Cup Final.

Hearts manager, Robbie Neilson has of course worked wonders to turn the club around in the last 12 months, however Sibbick isn't surprised to see Hearts back in a position of strength.

When asked if he thought such a turnaround was possible, he responded: "Yes, of course. Even last time I was here we managed to get to the semi-finals of the Scottish Cup and then Covid-19 hit and stopped everything. But, as I was looking in before coming here, I knew the vision of the club and what

they wanted to achieve.

“Already in a short space of time they’ve achieved that. We want to keep heading in that direction and it’s great to be a part of.

On the Hampden semi-final he added: “We knew how big a game it was, and we didn’t want to lose that game because nobody wants to lose those big games, especially when you’ve got the chance to reach a final and win some silverware. We knew what was at stake.”

That semi-final victory guaranteed Hearts group stage European football next season, something Sibbick and the rest of the team are very much looking forward to experiencing.

“As a player you want to be playing in these competitions, to play against some massive teams and test yourself. It’s the best in the world. It’s definitely something to look forward to next season.”

Sibbick remains a very raw talent, at the young age of 22 he still has aspects of his game to improve on, but he is smart enough to realise that.

The Hibs goal at the weekend came from him taking too much time on the ball and with a wry smile, he admitted he’ll be sure to find row Z next time.

“It’s tough when you are in and out of the team. Every player wants that consistent run, I know I made a mistake for their goal in the semi-final. Next time I will just smash it away!

“All the players here are united, there are no specific friendship groups, everyone talks and is together. When you play on the pitch you know someone else wants your spot, so you have to cherish that opportunity.

“I think I have grown a lot here, when I first left Hearts, I didn’t play a competitive game for a year, I went on loan in

Belgium, and it didn't work out. I had to focus on myself as a person and take time off the pitch and realise what was going on.

"You just want to be playing games, especially with what was going on with the pandemic. I could not go home to see my family and they could not get out to see me. It was tough, but I think it helped me grow.

"At the back end of season, I went to Barnsley and played every game. I think it made me realise a lot about myself and here we are now."



Scottish Cup Semi-Final – Heart of Midlothian FC v Hibernian FC

16/04/2022

Pic shows: 2 first half goals by Ellis Simms and Stephen Kingsley were enough to get Hearts to the final as Hearts beat Hibs 2-1 Hibs in the Scottish Cup semi final at Hampden Park, Glasgow

Credit: Ian Jacobs