

Hearts: Neilson provides Toby Sibbick injury update ahead of Rangers double-header

Hearts boss Robbie Neilson currently finds himself in a strange position.

With back-to-back matches against Rangers, the latter being the Scottish Cup Final at Hampden on 21 May, he is faced with a selection dilemma.

At Fir Park on Wednesday, skipper Craig Gordon and Barrie McKay were rested as Hearts fell to a 2-1 defeat in Lanarkshire, however at Tynecastle, Neilson wants to sign off a successful league campaign with a home win.

Rangers are faced with a similar situation. Saturday's match means nothing in comparison with Wednesday's Europa League Final in Seville. Manager Giovanni van Bronckhorst is sure to rotate his squad for the trip to Gorgie ahead of one of the biggest games in Rangers' recent history.

Back-to-back fixtures like this are rare, however Neilson was faced with a similar situation against Hibernian last month. Hibs visited Tynecastle in the league a week before the pair met at Hampden in the Scottish Cup semi-final.

Hearts were able to maintain a one-game-at-a-time mentality, as they went on to win both matches and Neilson is keeping the same method this time around.

“Our focus just now is on tomorrow’s game and once that is done then we will focus on the final,” he said.

“Yes, there is a bit about [John] Souttar coming back, [Craig] Halkett coming back, about giving [Michael] Smith gametime. But for us, I think it is important with it being the last game at Tynecastle that we try and win it.

“Any game you play with Hearts you are expected to win it. We can’t go into these games and put out a lesser team because we are expected to win. Especially when it is against an Old Firm team at Tynecastle.

“The last game of the season is always important at any club because it can bring that momentum that can carry on into next season as well. The fans have been brilliant this season. We would like to think we can give them a good send off and that gets us ready for the final and for next year.”

Defender Toby Sibbick was stretchered off in Lanarkshire on Wednesday, sparking fears that his season may be over, however Neilson confirmed that is not the case and is expecting only long-term absentee, Beni Baningime to be unavailable for the final two matches of the season.

“Everyone is available apart from Beni Baningime. Everybody is ready for some sort of game time. Guys like Souttar, Halkett, Smith and Devlin will all be involved in the game.

“Toby’s fine, he trained today. It’s the great comeback! I think it was more he got kicked right on his nerve on his shin, so it was painful to be fair. Then a couple of hours later it settled down. He’s available.”