

# Sibbick thanks fans and wants to leave Europe on a high

Toby Sibbick thanked the fans for singing his name during his Man of the Match performance as Hearts edged Latvian combine RFS 2-1 at Tynecastle in the UEFA Europe Conference League.

Goals by Lawrence Shankland and Andy Halliday in the first 12 minutes secured the welcome win despite a rocket shot from Kevin Friesenbichler which flew into the net after 39 minutes.

Hearts complete their Group A games away to Istanbul on Thursday but first they travel to Ross County in the cinch Scottish Premiership on Sunday, a key game according to manager Robbie Neilson

Iselworth-born Sibbick spoke to Hearts TV about the game and the reaction of the fans who saluted the 23-year-old by chanting his name and that's a significant change as the player has suffered criticism from fans recently.

The 6ft 2in defender (pictured second left by **Nigel Duncan** on his way to training at The Orium) took centre stage and showed what he can do against European opposition. Reflecting on an entertaining 90-plus minutes at Tynecastle, the stylish player he said: "We started the game really well and passed the ball well and we were moving into the right positions were causing them (RFS) problems.

"When we got 2-0 up I felt we got complacent and let them back into the game. We had to dig it out in the end but, overall, it is a win and another win in Europe so we have to be happy with that."

Sibbick was cool and composed throughout and his performance brought fans to their feet. Their reaction gave the young player confidence and the defender said: "It is obviously a

nice feeling to hear the crowd noise (during the game), but we got the three points to get our confidence back and hopefully we can take that forward on Sunday.

“Of course I am happy with the way I played (against RFS) but it is something I need to do in the game. I have to try to take bits and add them to my game and I think I did that tonight and, hopefully, I can continue to do that as it goes on. I’m delighted and it is a nice confidence boost when the fans chant your name.”

Istanbul still top Group A despite a 2-1 reverse in Fiorentina. They have ten points, the same as the Italians, with Hearts on six points and RFS on two. All the teams have played five games.

The Turkish side lead the table on goal difference, having scored 11 and conceded two, while third-placed Hearts have scored five and conceded 13, the biggest total against in the division.

Sibbick said: “We have had some tough results but we go other there (to Istanbul) to impose our game and try to win a game of football. That’s what we want to do as footballers, play in big games, and we want to leave it (Group A) on a high.”