

# Shankland says Hearts will be ready for Cup clash

Lawrence Shankland says it is an honour and privilege to be captain Hearts, and the striker would love to help power the Tynecastle team into the next round of the Scottish Cup at Easter Road on Sunday (kick-off 2pm or watch on Viaplay Sports 1).

The Glasgow-born player is nearing the 20-goal threshold, and he revealed during his pre-match media briefing at The Orium that the number is mentioned nearly every day, but his focus is on helping the team win silverware and the cup is one way of doing that.

Hearts, of course, go into the clash on a high after a 5-0 victory over Aberdeen at Tynecastle on Wednesday and also a 3-0 win at the same venue over Hibs in the New Year fixture.

The Jambos have won 147 of the 332 matches played between the pair in the three main Scottish competitions, Hibs have won 86, are the Gorgie club also unbeaten in eight games against their Capital rivals.

Shankland said: "Obviously, in the Scottish Cup you always look forward to the draw and it is a massive one (against Hibs)."

Hibs striker Kevin Nisbet and Shankland have been spotlighted

in social media recently and the captain admitted that it was difficult to escape the chat, but he added: "Kevin has come back after a long-term injury and he has done well.

"I don't think Kevin and I will be taking too much to do with it (the social media). The most important thing for me is Hearts and the weekend.

"We go into the game confident, we have had some good results lately and we are eight unbeaten. That helps you going into the game."

Shankland said he was delighted to be given the armband and added: "It is a privilege and honour to captain this club. It is a little bit of a challenge (being captain), it brings extra responsibilities around the club."

He admitted that Hearts have been producing good performances so he has not had to read the "riot act" on the field but he stressed: "We know how big (Sundays) game is and we know we were good on Wednesday (against Aberdeen), but we have worked in training and come Sunday we will be ready to go."

The 27-year-old, who has scored 16 goals in 22 cinch Scottish Premiership games, 11 at Tynecastle, one in the UEFA Europa League and two in the UEFA Europa Conference League, said: "It is a game of football that we can control and we will take a full support there and fans are always turning up in good numbers and we will look forward to this one at the weekend."