

Gibson eyes three points in Capital Cup showdown

Dean Gibson, Hibs women's manager, hopes the Capital Cup clash with arch city rivals, Hearts, supported by Baillie Gifford, does not to go a penalty shootout this time, but points are more important than silverware for the ambitious team boss.

The Tynecastle clash (kick-off 13.10 on Sunday) also counts towards the Scottish Women's Premier League and, currently, Hibs are only three points adrift of the Jambos women.

On November 27 last year, Hibs edged their rivals on penalties after they were level at 1-1 at the end of regulation time, Emma Brownlie opening the scoring after 62 minutes and Crystal Thomas levelling with six minutes of regulation time left, and Gibson told a press briefing at Tynecastle that his side had injury worries ahead of Sunday's fixture. Tickets for the game are free.

He added: "You want to do it in 90 minutes when it is more in your control, but the first game (against Hearts) we deserved to win in 90 minutes as we had a number of chances and we could not get the ball over the line at vital times.

"We did well to claw the game back and win it on penalties, but the Capital Cup comes second."

Hearts are fourth in the table with 30 points from 18 games having won nine, drawn three and lost six. Hibs are three points behind in fifth position and they have won eight, drawn three and lost seven of their 18 games.

There is a difference in goal scoring, Gibson's squad having celebrated 40 goals against Hearts tally of 25. However, the Tynecastle team have let in 18 and Hibs shipped 31, and Gibson admitted that he is disappointed with the numbers in the goals against column.

Gibson (picture courtesy of Scottish Women's Premier League and taken *by Malcolm Mackenzie*), said: "We have not conceded as many goals as the teams who are below us, however, at the start of the season we had a real issue with defending set-plays and we fixed that. We don't concede much from open play.

"We had to improve quickly and we score a lot of goals but if you score two or three goals you should be winning games and there was a spell in the season where we were scraping by or drawing games.

"The defensive side we have got better at and the 31 goals conceded looks bad but that was due to the first game when we got a little bit of a hiding off Celtic (the Hoops won 9-0 on August 7 in the West of Scotland), but since then we have improved."

Chances will again be at a premium on Sunday, a point Gibson conceded and he added: "That was the message to the squad ahead of the game at Easter Road, but we created a lot of chances and we have to take confidence from that.

"We know they have changed their shape but, at the same time, they don't score as many goals as us."

Spanish-born Eva Olid, Hearts' head coach, said the squad are looking forward to Sunday and said that they had recorded some pleasing performances in recent games but the games have not

always ended with the desired result.

The recent draw at Motherwell (it finished 1-1 on February 1) was a disappointment when Hearts were expected to win but she added: "The performance was really good."

Goal scoring, she admitted, is an issue and Olid added: "I always say that the the final third is something we have to work on and we are focused on that in our training sessions. We have to score more goals but I know we will improve in that soon.

"We can see we have a solid defence and Charlotte (Parker-Smith), our goalkeeper, is doing an excellent job this season and the balance between attack and defence is what we are looking for."

The points, she stressed, are more important than the Capital Cup and Olid said: "We know that if we win we can go six points ahead of Hibs and that is important and the Capital Cup is an extra. What is good is that somebody is supporting women's football and that is a positive."