

Fans anxious to know what happens next at Hearts

Some fans expressed the view during the last few days that Robbie Neilson was bullet proof at Tynecastle. Others wanted the former player out and a message sprayed outside the club's stadium last week bore witness to that.

The axe fell only 24 hours after the club's fifth straight defeat in the cinch Premiership, a 2-0 home reverse to St Mirren, the Gorgie club's sixth defeat in seven games, their only recent win being a 3-0 home victory over stuttering St Johnstone on March 4.

St Mirren are now one point adrift of fourth-placed Hearts who are now two points behind Aberdeen, a team they thrashed 5-0 at Tynecastle earlier this season. Neilson also guided his men to a league and cup win over Hibs.

How times have changed. Aberdeen sacked Jim Goodwin after their defeat at Hibs and in came Barry Robson who has transformed the club's fortunes.

The Dons have overtaken Hearts who appeared to be sitting pretty in third place in the 12-strong table with a healthy safety net. That was only a few short weeks ago. Another journey in Europe looked odds on.

That would, of course, have reaped financial rewards as

finishing third in the table is huge. This season, the Tynecastle club earned around £5m competing in the Europa League qualifiers and then the Conference League.

That cash allowed Neilson to build and he added players during the transfer window with defender James Hill coming in from Bournemouth.

Hill has started a number of games but Garang Kuol, who played in the World Cup for Australia and recently scored for his country in an international fixture, has had limited game time.

Japanese recruit, Yutaro Oda, has enjoyed even less exposure. Yes, much-talked-about, Congolese central midfielder, Beni Banningime, who was a key man last term, has been missed for some time and midfield is undoubtedly a problem area, an issue which has increased with the sending off of experienced Robert Snodgrass for two yellow cards on Saturday. Neilson's charges have, by his own admission, recently lost poor goals and senior players, men he was relying on to lead the team, have suffered dips in form.

Overall, the Glasgow-born former player was in charge for 124 games during his second spell at the club, winning 63, drawing 22 and losing 39.

The 42-year-old applauded fans as he walked from the Tynecastle pitch to the tunnel after the St Mirren defeat. He received a chorus of boos from fans who expect results.

Well, what now? The club promise a further statement but have not said when.

The clock is ticking as Hearts are due at Easter Road on Saturday for a Derby clash with arch rivals Hibs and the Tynecastle team's success-hungry fan base will be searching social media and the club's website for information on who will be in the dugout and calling the shots at 12.30pm.