

Football: Naismith there is “togetherness” at Tynecastle

Steven Naismith, Hearts’ interim manager, believes the Tynecastle team cannot underestimate cinch Premiership bottom markers Ross County when the sides meet at Tynecastle on Saturday (kick-off 15.00).

Malky Mackay is, he said, an experienced manager who has created a well-organised team with a sound defence.

However, it is a game the 36-year-old from Irvine is desperate to win to snap a confidence-dipping losing run in their final game before the split in the league.

And he assured the club’s success-hungry fans that since he took over from former manager Robbie Neilson less than two weeks ago tthere has been a togetherness.

The players and staff have given the former Scotland international 100 per cent, the players have tried to get better and they have strived to do what the coaching team want them to do.

And the former player added: “I am really happy with where the squad is and the biggest thing now is getting results.

“We needed one last week and we need one this week and it is football. It is hard, because of what we see on the training

pitch. They are delivering. We see in meetings how responsive the players are and their feedback has been brilliant.

“That does not get you success. What gets you success is playing on Saturday, playing with an enjoyment, playing with a freedom to play the best we can and that gets you results. That is what we need every Saturday from now until the end of the season.”

Reflecting on the defeat at East Road, Naismith said that there was one incident in the game at Easter Road in which Hearts lost 1-0 to arch rivals Hibs, Every other moment in the game he claimed Hearts defended well.

They were punished, he said, for one switch off in the game and added: “As a defender, you get punished for switching off.

“There were strides made in how we defend as a team, and I still feel we need more going forward, but these are small details. We need to play going forward, we need to cause the opposing team problems.

“Change is hard and change takes time but we have to to get the results in this transitional period from now until the end of the season to finish off well.”