

Naismith: there is pressure on everybody on Derby day

Discipline will be vital as Hearts bid to secure fourth spot in the cinch Premiership and guarantee European football for Tynecastle next season.

That's the view of interim manager Steven Naismith ahead of Saturday's final game of the season which is against arch rivals Hibs (kick-off 12.30).

Naismith told a press briefing at The Oriam that Saturday was a big game but added that every Derby is a big game. Hearts are at home and he added: "You want to win the game."

In the short period the Irvine-born boss has been in charge, the two significant games for him have been against Ross County and Aberdeen, as Hearts had lost at Hibs 1-0 in the game before they met the men from Dingwall, and lost 2-0 at home to Celtic and drawn 2-2 at St Mirren ahead of the clash with third-placed Aberdeen.

Naismith said: "Everybody was asking the question of where is this going to go. Against Ross County we put in a great performance and against Aberdeen, labelled by everybody as a must-win game, we go behind, control the game, did what we wanted to do within the game and it was a successful day. This is (the Hibs game) one of those days when we need to go out and perform."

He added: "We have done what we needed to do in getting the

points we have and Hibs have got their points. There is pressure on the game for everybody involved.

“We are confident we can put our stamp and our authority on the game in terms of what we want to do to cause them problems but we need to defend better than we have done in the previous game.”

Naismith believes Hearts are a much better team than they were before he took charge, with a clearer idea of what they want to do in and out of possession, and with a clear style.

He admitted: “Results have not been exactly what we want but we are at the business end of a season and it is against the best five teams in the league. There are loads of positives and what we are focused on now is finishing it off with another really good aggressive performance at home and get the win. Reflection can be done after that.”

Forward Barrie McKay (pictured in training by **Nigel Duncan**) said Hearts’ passionate fans give the squad a lift and will have a major part to play in the Derby.

The Paisley-born winger said he still enjoyed freedom to play where he considers best and added: “The manager wants me on the ball and creating stuff.”

His role, therefore, had not changed since Naismith took charge.

The 28-year-old said: “Since Steven came into the job the message has been clear and so has the way he wants us to play. On Saturday we have to make sure we do everything we want to do and play the way we want to and not give away cheap goals.”

Hibs may have won the last clash 1-0 but McKay said Hearts had gone unbeaten in “however many” before that and a set-piece undid Hearts in the last clash and McKay said: “That has probably been our Achilles heel this year, set-pieces, but we

go into the game with confidence.”