

Naismith praises squad ahead of Derby clash

Steven Naismith acknowledged the enormity of the cinch Premiership clash with Hibs at Tynecastle on Saturday (12.30) and said the club's home performances have been really good so far this term.

Under his leadership, Hearts have started well and given the fans a chance to get behind the team and that will not change on Saturday said the interim boss. He told Hearts TV: "Come Saturday it will be the same again."

The former Scotland international forward said: "We have a style of play in and out of possession and, hopefully, it will an unbelievable atmosphere and a great end to the season."

Looking back at the 2-2 draw against Rangers at Ibrox, Naismith said he had mixed emotions and added: "There were some really, really good moments, really good discipline, really good understanding about what we want them to do, but we gave them two goals that ultimately stopped us getting the victory.

"It is things we should be better at all round, decision making in these moments, especially when you are going away from home you need to make sure you are willing to dictate and control the game. At moments (at Ibrox) we lacked that control and that ultimately cost us."

He argued that in the last three games Hearts have gone behind but still got something from the fixtures and he added: "It is credit to the boys.

"When you come up against good teams there are moments when you accept you are not having the ball and you need to stay solid and wait for your moment, but when you win possession back you need to be brave to take control again.

"I felt we did that really well. Possibly one persons position in specific moves cost us real getting real control. We created chances, we managed to be brave to play some good combination play to break through their lines and we scored two good goals."

Hibs, of course, go into the clash boosted by their 4-2 victory over Celtic at Easter Road in midweek, but stars indicate that Hearts hold the upper hand in recent matches.

The Jambos have won three of the last five with Hibs winning once and there was one draw. In the last five games, Hearts have recorded two draws and a win plus a defeat.

Hibs have won two, drawn one and lost one and they have climbed into fifth spot, two points adrift of Hearts with both having played 37 games.

Hearts have scored 62 goals and let in 56 and their city rivals have scored 56 and let in 58.

Fans should remember that there are significant road closures around Tynecastle on Saturday because of a major concert at Murrayfield.

Other news from Tynecastle is the inclusion of Connor Smith and Lewis Neilson in the Scotland under-21 squad for two friendly matches against Norway in June.

Peter Haring (picured in training by **Nigel Duncan**) has signed a one-year extension to his contract but Gary Mackay-Steven,

Michael Smith and Ross Stewart are all leaving the club at the end of the season.