

McAvoy: 'Hearts players enjoy the environment we are trying to create'

Hearts play Plymouth on Thursday and new head coach, Frankie McAvoy, and the backroom team have been working the players hard to get them up to speed and to get them into the best shape they can be in what he described as "a short space of time" since they returned from their holiday break.

The weather has been extremely sunny and lovely but the sessions have been tough and McAvoy told *Hearts TV* that it was important to build camaraderie among the players.

The 55-year-old stressed: "People might think they (the trip to Spain) are holidays but they are anything but. The players will tell you how tiring and exhausting it can be but it is trying to build the core capability that we want within the team.

"We have a good strong group, they know each other well and there are areas we need to work on and I can start to see that coming to fruition.

"We had seven games at the end of last season, Naisey (Steven Naismith), Gordon (Forrest) and myself, and we can see that is

is looking good. It is early stages but hopefully we can get them kicking on.”

Bellshill-born McAvoy added: “This is not a sprint, this is a marathon in terms of the campaign they are going to be facing but it is important they start well and get in a good pre-season behind everybody puts us in good stead moving forward and that is the aim.”

McAvoy believes Naismith, Forrest (pictured in training) and himself work really well together as a team and there is good camaraderie between the trio. McAvoy admitted that he is a little older than Naismith and Forrest but he believes they have a fantastic future ahead of them in the game.

The former Preston North End head coach – he won 14 and drew nine of 33 games there between March 2021 and December of the same year – said: “I really love coming into to work every day and I think the players enjoy the environment we are trying to create, and that is really important for everybody going forward.”