

McAvoy 'not suprised' at Shankland speculation

Frankie McAvoy told the media that he had no knowledge of any prospective buyers for club skipper Lawrence Shankland and he said: "He has not intimated to me that he wants to move on."

The head coach added: "I am not surprised that there is speculation regarding him as he is a top player, but there is nothing I am aware of at the moment and, as far as I am concerned, he is our captain and hopefully he is available to lead our line tomorrow night."

Of course, the tomorrow night the head coach (pictured at the pre-match press conference at Tynecastle) referred to was the UEFA Europa Conference League second-leg against Norwegian side Rosenborg (kick-off 19.45 at Tynecastle).

McAvoy confirmed that Austrian midfielder Peter Haring rolled an ankle in the cinch Premiership home, no-score draw with Kilmarnock on Sunday, but he will be given every chance of making the squad.

Another midfielder, Congolese professional, Beni Banningime, is back in contention for a slot and the only player who will not be available for selection is Costa Rican newcomer, Kenneth Vargas, who was signed after the UEFA deadline.

McAvoy said: "We need to win the game and hopefully it is in the 90 minutes or the 120 minutes or even in penalty kicks. It

will be a tough game and we know we are a goal behind but the big thing from last week is that they are good in transition.

“We need to make sure we are mindful of that and patience will be a big thing. We need to make sure that at the big moments we make the right choices, the right pass, the right runs and hopefully get behind them and create the right opportunities.

“That was probably the big disappointment from the first-half of the game last weekend (against Kilmarnock) but, hopefully, we will be a wee bit better than that tomorrow night.”

He added: “Any experience you can draw upon is massive and tomorrow night will depend on how it pans out for ourselves. Rosenborg will be delighted they have a goal lead as their strength is in the counter.

“So, with the backing behind us, I think it (Tynecastle) can be a daunting place for anybody. Hopefully that works in our favour but time will tell.”