

Home fans set to welcome new boss Montgomery

Nick Montgomery presides over his first game at Easter Road when St Johnstone come calling on Saturday (15.00) in the cinch Premiership.

The new manager will undoubtedly be looking to increase the pressure on his opposite number, Steven MacLean, whose side sit uncomfortably at the foot of the 12-strong table.

Hibs are tenth with four points, just two ahead of struggling Saints, who have only scored two goals and conceded eight in their five games in the domestic league so far.

The Easter Road side have scored nine goals but conceded ten and defence has been their Achilles heel so far this season. Two goals came in 18 second-half minutes at Rugby Park last Saturday as Derek McInnes' men roared back from a 2-0 deficit.

An own goal by Will Dennis and a counter from Dylan Vente seemed to have put Montgomery in dreamland with a win on his debut looming, but football can be cruel.

This game carries extra significance as it is the first of a triple-header at Easter Road as league games are scheduled either side of the Hibeas' Viaplay Cup quarter-final tie against St Mirren.

Complacency is not something that Hibs can contemplate even if the Perth club have failed to score an away goal this term. They have, however, registered a no-score draw at Celtic Park.

Rangers beat them 2-0 at McDiarmid Park and MacLean hopes to have Sven Sprangler, Drey Wright and Nicky Clark available for the trip.

Christian Doidge had stitches inserted in an eye injury suffered at Rugby Park but he has trained this week.

Dylan Levitt, a recent injury victim, was included in the matchday squad for Kilmarnock but the new manager will have to make his plans minus Chris Cadden, Harry McKirdy and Jojo Wollacott who remain sidelined with injuries.

Montgomery is introducing his style of play to Hibs, a fluid 4-4-2, which he used in the A-League and it was successful as unfancied Central Coast Mariners won the championship using that formation.

The new coach also stressed the need for his men to be more compact out of possession and another thing noted last weekend by observers was that goalkeeper David Marshall did not take goal kicks. That job was delegated to defenders Will Fish and Rocky Bushiri (pictured).

One notable inclusion in the travelling party was Jair Tavares who returned to the matchday squad and came on as a substitute. His pace could be a weapon this term.

Montgomery told Hibs official website that he was really happy with the squad and he will be even happier if Hibs can collect three points on Saturday.