

Shankland urges Hearts: 'play the game, not the occasion'

Lawrence Shankland's last cup semi-final ended in defeat when he played for Dundee United.

Hearts' skipper does not want a repeat on Sunday when the Tynecastle team square-up to favourites Rangers at Hampden (15.00) in the last four of the Viaplay Scottish League Cup.

The Scottish international told the media at The Oriam (pictured) that the aim on Sunday was to "win at all costs" and added: "It is a big occasion, obviously, a semi-final at the National Stadium and it is something we are all looking forward to.

"In these games it is just about winning, that's it. There are a lot of different factors. We need to play the game and not play the occasion. You can easily get caught up in everything that goes on around the game but, for us, it is about beating Rangers in a game of football."

He is sure that not getting over the line in semi-finals and finals niggles some of the players who have been at the club for some time and he recalled: "The last time I was at Hampden I was at Dundee United and we lost in a semi-final and losing annoyed me.

"It's my first experience going with Hearts but the good thing is that they (other players) have had the experience of being there, they can deal with losing there and that is the worst case scenario so, hopefully, that gives them the freedom to go there and play."

He added: "You want to go there with a fresh mind. We put in a good performance at Ibrox, albeit the last ten minutes do not go to plan but, apart from that, it was really good and we can take the positives from that."