

# Cochrane: confidence is growing 'week-by-week'

Alex Cochrane denied that there is a mental black about facing Rangers, a team which has won four of the last five games against Hearts.

And the Brighton-born defender, who will play his 100th game for Hearts, if selected, against the Ibrox men, said: "We take each game as it comes."

Hearts are on a roll having won their last four games and the 23-year-old, who has scored five goals in his time at Tynecastle, said confidence is growing in the team "week-by-week".

Cochrane (pictured) first arrived at Gorgie on loan from Brighton and Hove Albion in July 2021, and he is now a fan favourite. Confidence is growing and currently, the Men in Maroon sit in third place in the table. The England under-20s cap said: "That is where we want to be."

Asked if Hearts were "super-motivated" to beat Rangers, which is the belief of Ibrox manager, Philippe Clement, Cochrane said: "We want to win every game. It (against Rangers) is a game of football."

Concentration and focus will be key and he said: "We have to be ready to play from the start."

Defensively, he said, Hearts are growing as a squad and he added: "We are working hard in training. We have a good

relationship at the back.”

Meanwhile, head coach Steven Naismith said the November Manager of the Month Award, sponsored by Glen’s Vodka, was reward for months of behind-the-scenes work by the entire coaching staff.

And skipper Lawrence Shankland has been named the Player of the Month in the cinch Premiership.

Naismith added: “Obviously, everybody likes to be recognised for what they do. We have had some good results, but we know there is a long way to go. This (Manager of the Month Award) shows that we are going in the right direction.”

The clash with the Glasgow giants, he said, was no different to any other game, however, as the home team on this occasion it is important to be on the front-foot and to cause the visitors problems.

Naismith added: “Hearts want to win the game against Rangers.”

Blocking could be an issue and the coach said that this was only one aspect of the game but he does not expect Clement to change his style for the clash with the Capital club