

# Lowry unlikely to be in Hearts squad to face Celtic

Steven Naismith, Hearts' head coach, confirmed the squad was much the same as it was for last weekend's defeat at Aberdeen but Alex Lowry has a "small issue" with his back which is being investigated so it is unlikely he will be involved with the squad when they visit Parkhead to face the current cinch Premiership pace-setters.

And Naismith expects a reaction from the 2-1 defeat at Pittodrie, despite leading 1-0, as "everyone sensed the disappointment afterwards".

He added: "How the first half went, you get ourselves in a good position and to give it up in the manner in which we did, that was a disappointing thing. Like any setback, you need to talk over it and you need to understand what the problem was.

"You need to fix it and you expect a reaction. Earlier on in the season when we've had similar, they have reacted quite well to it so, do not get me wrong, it is going to be a really tough game and you are coming against the champions, the team

who have loads of experience and you are going to them at home so we know it will be difficult.”

Naismith said that the style of play preferred by former manager, Ange Postecoglou, is different from that of current boss, Brendan Rodgers, but he added: “There has probably been a turn over in players which again takes time, but you can’t get away from the fact that they are a good squad.

“They are a dangerous squad that can hurt you so like any time you play against the Old Firm you need to be defensively secure to give yourself a chance but you have got to get up the pitch and be brave in possession and that is going to give you a chances in the game. If not, it can be a long afternoon.”

Naismith added: “I think there will be a focus. Obviously, from the game the other night (a 2-1 victory over Dutch side Feyenoord in the IEFA Champions League), I have experienced it as a player, it is a really big high but the last few league results will mean they will have an eye in trying to make that better so I think they will be a dangerous team but we have got to go there and cause them problems. To give yourself any chance that is what you have to do.”

PICTURE: Alex Lowry in action against St Johnstone. Picture by ***Ian Jacobs***