

Reggae Boy loving life at Tynecastle

Dexter Lembikisa rifled home with his left foot as Jamaica edged Panama 1-0 in the third place play-off in the Concacaf Nations League in North America.

The sensational strike secured the bronze medal for the Reggae Boyz and helped, in part, to make up for their extra-time defeat in the semi-final to USA.

London-born Lembikisa says he feels fine despite the long travel across the Atlantic for the international fixtures and he believes joining Hearts from Championship side Rotherham has really developed his game.

The defender was at South Yorkshire-based Rotherham on loan from Premiership combine Wolverhampton Wanderers before moving north of the Border and while Hearts sit comfortably in third spot in the cinch Premiership his former team, nicknamed The Millers, have been relegated from the second tier of English football.

It was a different issue there where defence was critical. Hearts are more attack minded, something Lembikisa enjoys, and the professional player now hopes for more game time before the end of the cinch Premiership to help improve his game even further.

Reflecting on his international strike which is currently playing on social media, the right back said the goal

felt "amazing" and he added: "The space opened up for me to get into that pocket and I hit it.

"I've not scored many before that but that was good, it was a good feeling and, 100 per cent, I want to add more goals to my game.

"I like to get forward, I like to take guys on and I like to score goals so, hopefully, I can continue doing that."

Lembikisa made his debut for the Jam Tarts in late January at Tynecastle against Dundee, scoring after 74 minutes in a 3-2 success and the player said the overall experience at Tynecastle has been good.

He added: "I have really enjoyed it, the training and everything and it is going well. It is quite different from Rotherham because of the position the team were in. Hearts are definitely more attacking, putting pressure on other teams, and there it was a bit more defending."

The physical aspect of the game at Rotherham, he argued, is similar to that in the cinch Premiership and he added: "It is physically demanding (here), running, competing.

"The most important thing (for me) is playing games because it is my first season playing professional football."

Lembikisa is not sure about what will happen in the summer close season but he confirmed that Wolves, his parent club, do speak to him and the defender said: "They (Wolves) check up on me and tell me what I have been doing well and what I need to continue doing.

"They are definitely talking to me. I don't want to know too much (about what will happen in the future). I just want to focus and perform and do what I can, but my game has definitely developed up here.

"I have improved technically and tactically and Naisey (Hearts

head coach, Steven Naismith) has given me freedom to go inside and go outside and have a relationship with my winger.”

The player admitted that he sometimes feels the pressure from Hearts’ passionate support at Tynecastle but added: “It is a good type of pressure when the fans are trying to encourage you to play well and obviously they want you to do well.

“I don’t feel it so much in away games. I just try to enjoy it and play football.” His one disappointment here is the weather, but the player said: “You have just got to get on with it.” He’s right. We do.

PICTURE: Dexter speaks to the written press at The Oriam.
Picture ***Nigel Duncan***