

“Easy Decision” to name Joe Newell as skipper says David Gray

Hibs Head Coach David Gray has explained why he named Joe Newell as his Club Captain.

“It was an easy decision for me”, Gray told Hibernian TV.

“If I take myself back to one of my interim periods on charge – I gave Joe Newell the armband for the first time.

“The reason I did that was because I needed him to be the best player on the pitch that day.

“I thought by giving him that extra responsibility, I could try to get another 10% out of him.

“In the last few years, Joe has really developed into the role. There is a big difference between being captain and leading the boys on a Saturday – to being the Club Captain.

“As Club Captain, you still have a role and responsibility to lead and represent the badge off the pitch as well. That is something that can hopefully push Joe on again.

“From a performance point of view, he deserves it. In the last couple of years, we haven’t been as successful as we would’ve liked on the pitch, but Joe has always stood up to it – he’s always tried to drive the team forward with his own performances.

“He drives the standards on the training pitch and it’s now

vital that he can embrace the role and hopefully it'll help push him to become an even better player.”

Gray starts his competitive tenure in charge of Hibs away to Elgin City in the Premier Sports Cup this afternoon.

After a positive pre-season, which included three victories in pre-season friendlies, several new signings joining the Club and a productive training camp in the Netherlands, Gray is excited for the return of competitive football.

He continued: “I am really looking forward to it and I’m really pleased with how preparations have gone over the last few weeks. Everything we have been doing has been gearing up towards the first competitive game – that has been our full focus.

“I am really happy with where the squad is, where the fitness levels are and the work we have managed to do – particularly in Holland.

“Since we have got back, the mood has been really positive – the camp was excellent and the new players have integrated into the squad really well.”