

Naismith believes competition for places is a major driver

Steven Naismith, Hearts' head coach, summed up the performance in the 3-0 defeat at Fleetwood Town, who play in the fourth level of the English football league system, as "poor".

Naismith (pictured) told Hearts TV post-game that the coaching staff knew the way the Lancashire club would play and Hearts wanted to see the progression of the team through pre-season training.

Another issue was coming up against a different system and that meant there would be grey areas and it was, he added, how the players dealt with them.

Naismith said: "We did not deal with that well if I am honest. If you contrast our energy levels and desire, and you contrast that with (the game against) Spurs, it was totally different."

He admitted that Hearts left themselves man-for-man at the back at times in Fleetwood and added: "We have a lot of work to do. It has been a poor afternoon in terms of the result and the way the game played out.

"We lost two really poor goals from our point of view but we missed a couple of opportunities that we have to do better in. They get the third goal and the game dies off, frustration builds."

Rangers come to Tynecastle next Saturday (kick-off 12.30) and Naismith said: "If a player cannot get up for the start of a season, for what is going to be a big season, then they are not going to last long here.

"The biggest thing we have managed to do over the last year is bring competition for places into the squad and that is going to be the biggest driver.

"If players are not performing then they are not going to play as there is somebody there willing to take their place."