

Popular defender Cochrane set to leave Hearts

Hearts have accepted a bid from for defender Alex Cochrane and Midlands club Birmingham City, who play in Football League One, are understood to be the club involved.

Jambos head coach, Steven Naismith, believes the Jambos are getting a good deal for the 24-year-old who has become a fan favourite at Tynecastle.

Brighton-born Cochrane has now to agree terms but is expected to move bringing to an end a short but productive career for the Gorgie men.

The talented English left-back joined the Jambos for a six-figure sum on a permanent deal in 2022 from Brighton and Hove Albion after a loan spell and it is reported that a fee in excess of £1m has been agreed. That's good business for the Jambos, according to Naismith.

Cochrane was not in the squad on Saturday and head coach Naismith confirmed to a media briefing minutes after the 2-1 defeat by English League Two outfit, Leyton Orient, that the club have accepted the bid and that things will probably move quite quickly in the next three or four days.

He added: "For us as a club it is an example of finding a talent. He is a good player and he also has a drive to want to go as high as he can in the game and maximise what he can do in the game.

“In the last three or four years he has worked very hard at that and he had a year left on his contract.

“It is a good deal for the club and it is one that Alex wants to take. Everybody comes out of it well in respect that we have progressed a player, we have made a profit on him and he is moving to a big club and one he wants to be at.”

He added: “That is the business side of football and that is the way it has got to be. You need to sit and weigh up what the benefit is. You need to produce players, you need to identify players to bring to the club to make better, and that is a good business model and something the club have not done well enough over the years.”

Cochrane has made 64 appearances for Hearts and scored two goals after playing 32 games on loan following two other loan spells, one of Union SG in Belgium and another to East Grinstead Town. He did not make any appearances for Brighton, his home town club.

His international career includes an outing for England under-16 and two for England under-21

Hearts are not going to rush in to the transfer market, according to the head coach who added: “We will look at the squad but we have players who can play there, Kingsley, Penrice, Kye Rowles can play there as well and so on. We have cover.

“Over the next month or so we will see where we are sitting as a squad and where everybody is at.”

Naismith said: “That is something that I identified last year. We do not want to be the club that has to panic and make a big bid we are not sure on. We are comfortable where we are sitting now.”