

Former Hibs manager Paul Heckingbottom appointed manager of Preston North End

Former Hibs boss Paul Heckingbottom has been appointed manager of Preston North End.

The 47-year-old took over at Easter Road from Neil Lennon in February 2019 and was in charge for 32 games.

His last match in the dugout was a League Cup semi-final defeat to Celtic at Hampden Park in November that year.

He was replaced by Jack Ross.

Heckingbottom, has managed in the top three divisions of English football, will be joined at North End by assistant Stuart McCall.

Following an extensive playing career, which included spells with Darlington, Bradford City and Sheffield Wednesday, Heckingbottom's first coaching role came with Barnsley.

He led the Tykes to success in the EFL Trophy and the League One Play-Offs, and brought both Liam Lindsay and Brad Potts to the club once in the Championship.

Heckingbottom went on to take charge of Leeds United and Hibs, before enjoying huge success with Sheffield United, taking the Blades to an FA Cup semi-final and leading them to the top flight with a tally of 91 points.

Speaking after his appointment, he told the club media: "I'm

really delighted with it, ready to go, and champing at the bit really. It's a club I know well for lots of reasons and a league I know well, so it was a pretty easy decision.

"Experience is key. Knowing the players helps, and then having success in this league helps, so we know what it takes to compete. We know what it takes to do well and you can give that clear direction to try and get there, and that's the aim.

"The short-term goals are to get back on track. Longer term, we want to be a really, really competitive team in this league.

"We want to play in a way the fans can enjoy and in a way that gets the best out of the players, and when you get that it can be really powerful.

PNE Director, Peter Ridsdale added: "I'm delighted that Paul Heckingbottom has joined us as first team manager.

"We identified that we wanted Paul to be the man to take us forward and moved swiftly over the weekend. We met on Sunday, finalised the details late last night and he's here with us today, ready to get to work.

"I'm now looking forward with confidence with Paul and Stuart McCall in charge, and I think all Preston North End fans can be really excited about the season ahead."

The manager will be in attendance at tonight's Central League fixture against Derby County and will take charge of the first team on Saturday against Luton Town.