

Blair “buzzing” as he signs for Hearts

Blair Spittal was buzzing when he put pen to paper for ambitious Hearts on a three-year deal, and he continues to bed into the side with competition for places now on a real high.

Making sure he is on the team sheet regularly is top of his personal agenda and, to do that, he believes he must be on his game, contributing in every training session, so he catches the eye of the coaching team.

That, he feels, is the key to being successful with Hearts, but the 28-year-old, Erskine-born midfielder was under no illusions when he moved across country to Gorgie from Motherwell after 73 appearances and 15 goals.

You must, he said, be ready to grasp the chance when it comes as expectations are high for the Men in Maroon and he is acutely aware that Steven Naismith, Hearts' head coach, is determined to build on last year's achievements, two cup semi-finals and third place by a distance in the league.

You need to deal with those expectations, according to Spittal, but becoming a regular starter is what the former Queen's Park, Dundee United, Partick Thistle and Ross County player is focused on and he is also determined to play his part in helping his new employers go the distance in major competitions at home and abroad.

The European experience, meaning two matches plus travel every week, will test the resilience, strength and quality of the squad and could result in a turnover in players, opening the door for some, but that comes with the territory of aiming high in domestic and European competitions.

The player said: "It has been really good (being here). It has taken some time to get used to, but I am enjoying it so far. Now, I'm looking for the right opportunity to get some minutes (on the pitch.)"

Hearts were a winning team last season and Spittal admitted: "I've had to be a wee bit patient and, at the same time, take each day to learn what I can about my new team-mates.

"I have played a number of positions and I have been versatile (in the past), but it is about learning a certain style of football (here)."

He firmly believes that he will complete the style transition and make his mark, but Spittal admitted: "You can see the quality they have in the squad."

The talented player arrived in mid-June after a productive season at Fir Park, 13 goals in all competitions and second in assists in the Premiership with 11, and he said: "In the position I play in you are judged by numbers. Last season was a really good one for myself and I am looking to carry that on. Coming here, it is a massive club and it has been a smooth transition so far. I have no complaints."



Picture: Blair Spittal faces the media at The Oriam. Picture Nigel Duncan