

# **Fox: 'we need to start winning games of football'**

**Liam Fox was a Hearts supporter as a young boy so just imagine what his thoughts will be when he strides out of the tunnel at packed Tynecastle just before 3pm on Saturday to take charge of the Men in Maroon, an interim job he is "privileged and honoured" to do.**

The 40-year-old B Team coach has stepped into the breach after the sacking of head coach Steven Naismith, Gordon Forrest and Frankie McAvoy, and he stressed that he does not intend to reinvent the wheel.

Expect changes, little ones, as the former Dundee United manager and Cowdenbeath head coach aims to snap a disastrous run of eight straight defeats, and he explained that it had been a busy difficult week following the exits of the management trio, but he added: "Football and the way it is, we will just have to get back to work because we have a really important fixture on Saturday."

He was at Paisley last Saturday to watch as the Jambos skidded to a 2-1 defeat and felt that the squad had a really good first-half, but the second-half was a difficult game, but he said that any game in the Scottish Premiership League (SPL) is a tough game as you come up against top managers and top players and teams that cause you problems. Everybody was

disappointed that the team returned to Edinburgh with nothing.

Fox revealed that he has spoken to the ex-head coach who was very supportive, indicative of how Naismith is as a human being, he said, and Fox has concentrated on tidying up "wee bits and pieces" in Hearts play this week at Riccarton.

The former midfielder, who has played for Crusaders (Northern Ireland) on loan (ten games), Inverness Caley Thistle (26), Livingston (185) and Raith Rovers (55), explained that the mood in the squad was down on Monday as the management team "were really good human beings" and they knew they had a really big week coming up and hopefully, start winning games of football.

There were, he said, two ways he can approach the Ross County clash in the William Hill Premiership. He said: "We can be nervous, I want us to be looking forward to it as it is a huge week for this football club, exciting times if you are a player, coach or interim manager."

He alluded to the County clash followed by Hearts in Europe, travelling to Azerbaijan on Tuesday for Thursday's game with Belarus-based, Dinamo Minsk, and then on to Pittodrie to face high-flying Aberdeen, a club on level points with Celtic ahead of the skirmishes this weekend.

The former Cowdenbeath and Dundee United boss said: "It is a great opportunity to get us back going again. Don Cowie is bringing his team down here and they are well-organised and have quality, so it is the start of a massive week but it is one where we are looking forward to the challenges."

Looking back at the weekend dismissal, Fox said he was "more than happy to step up" and he added: "You do not become a bad player over a number of weeks, a number of days, there is no doubt that football has a funny way, lose a couple of games and the confidence goes down."

“They have to realise that they are still good players, very, very good players, and sometimes you just need a wee rub of the green, sometimes just a wee moment, and we are hoping that tomorrow (Saturday) is the day we get back on track.”

Fox said life is about how you react to adversity and bounce back and hope makes the world go round. He said: “One, I am not reinventing the wheel, two there will be small tweaks here and there, but a lot of the hours and the work that Steven, Frankie and Gordon put into this team, there were a lot of good things going on. We are hoping that a few wee changes will make a difference.

“There is a very good squad there, I’ve not had the time to reinvent the wheel even if I had wanted to, which I don’t, small wee bits of things. I need to put my personality on it and things I believe in and that’s what I hope came make a difference.”

Fox spent a short time during the media briefing to reflect on the cut-throat football management industry and said: “Every manager and his coaching staff need time and sometimes you do not get that. If you step into this industry you have to accept that is the way it is.

“You are lucky if you get 18 months, that is just the nature of it, everybody wants success today and when you step in you are aware of what the consequences could be.”

The Edinburgh-born coach said there is always a wee thing in the back of your head to test yourself by becoming a manager, but added: “The timelines are so short and the game so ruthless that you can see why a lot of people are happy being assistant managers and coaches. That is a possibly a wee bit safer.

“I have gone on record as saying that, at some point in the future, I would like to have another shot of it (being a manager), but I am in absolutely no rush because of the things

we have discussed.”

PICTURE: Liam Fox speaks to the media at The Oriam ahead of Saturday’s key clash with Ross County. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***