

McKinlay spells out why Naismith had to go

Andrew McKinlay, Hearts' chief executive officer, revealed that it was the club's second-half display at Paisley which finally brought the curtain down on head coach, Steven Naismith.

The disappointing run, in which the club have lost eight straight games, was also a major factor which led to Naismith and his assistants, Gordon Forrest and Frankie McAvoy, leaving the ambitious club after 17 months in charge.

McKinlay told the Tynecastle team's official website: "These times are never pleasant and it has been difficult. The football over the last few weeks has been difficult and we have all been hoping, the fan base, all of us, that we could turn this round.

"It became evident that to me and other at the weekend and others that we were not seeing signs of it turning round."

McKinlay went into the two fixtures, St Mirren (last Saturday) and Ross County (who visit Tynecastle on Saturday, kick-off 15.00), feeling that the club required, at the very least, four points and hopefully six.

He added: "Having said that, had we lost 2-1 at the weekend and we had a second-half performance which was unlucky or spirited or just did not get the rub of the green, that might have made us think slightly differently, but we didn't.

“We had a very average second-half performance and unfortunately left me in no doubt that we had to make a decision.”

Liam Fox was contacted by McKinlay on Sunday afternoon and he said: “First, I am thankful to Liam and his guys for stepping in, he was the right person to bring forward, given the work he has done with the B team, but, also, he has his European pro licence and he had experience of having managed a team at Premiership level, and I think he is the right person for this interim period.

“He understands that this is an interim period, he will give it his best shot, he knows that we need to start winning games and he is also aware that we are looking externally for the longer term. He appreciates the reason why we are doing that.

“I have the upmost respect for Liam, I know he is a very good football coach and I think he will do well for us.”

PICTURE: Flashback to Andrew McKinlay speaking to the press after the sacking of Robbie Neilson