

Critchley checks in at Tynecastle

Hearts have appointed Neil Critchley as their new head coach and the 45-year-old was formerly an assistant to Liverpool legend, Steven Gerrard, at Premiership combine, Aston Villa.

Critchley succeeds Steven Naismith who was sacked last month after a disastrous, eight-game losing streak at the start of the new season in the Scottish Premiership, despite a 0-0 draw with Rangers at Tynecastle on the opening day of the league campaign.

The Englishman has signed a deal to the end of the 2026/27 season and he will be assisted by Mike Garrity, a former Liverpool Academy, Blackpool, Lincoln City and QPR coach who has also coached in Norway and China.

The new boss, who worked under Brendan Rodgers and then Jurgen Klopp at Liverpool as an under-18 and under-23 coach, helping Trent Alexander-Arnold, among others, to learn their trade, and he posted a message on the official website of Heart of Midlothian FC.

It reads: "I am delighted to join this fantastic football club. I promise I will give this club everything. We want you to be excited by the team that you see on the pitch and come to support."

And the Crewe-born boss added: "We want to be the team that

nobody wants to play.”

Critchley said: “When you come to Tynecastle on a Saturday, the feeling should be optimistic and excited to see a team that gives the support reasons to get on their feet. You should be able to see the passion of the support reflected in the team.

“This is an exciting time for the club, and it rightly has high expectations. That starts with a simple objective, winning football matches, and our first opportunity to address that is when we play St Mirren in Gorgie on Saturday.

“The passion for this football club I’ve experienced in my short time here has warmed me. There’s passion, but also great compassion, shown both by the people who work here and the supporters.

“You very quickly come to understand how much Hearts means to those who care most about it, and how much of a difference it makes to their lives by giving them a successful team.

“I can’t wait to start this journey, and I’m looking forward to meeting all the players and getting down to work straight away.”