

Critchley 'encouraged' after watching Hearts train

Andrew McKinlay stressed there was more to the appointment of Neil Critchley than analytics. Being able to handle people was also vitally important and the chief executive believes that in Critchley he has the man to take Hearts forward.

McKinlay revealed that the panel drilled down into the career of the Crewe-born coach and one of the assets which stood out was Critchley's ability to improve players.

In that connection, the panel spoke to players – who McKinlay declined to name – to get a feel for how the 45-year-old works and he confirmed that the new head coach is also happy to work with a director of coaching, one of the models that the board have set moving forward.

Critchley was the only man the Gorgie club negotiated with about taking over at Tynecastle and the board were impressed with his CV which also includes working with under-age teams at Liverpool and as an assistant to ex-Liverpool star, Steven Gerrard, when he was manager of Aston Villa.

And McKinlay is confident fans will get behind the appointment.

The verbal endorsement came at a packed press conference in

the Media Suite at Tynecastle after a lengthy trackside photo session and Critchley is excited by the prospect of working with Hearts.

He watched the players train on Tuesday morning at Riccarton and said: "I am confident we have a good set of players. Hearts had a fantastic season last season. Obviously, it has not gone the way anyone would have wanted (this season) and that can happen sometimes. It was not for the want of trying.

"From what I have seen from this morning, I am encouraged by what we can do this season. The immediate aim is to win a game of football and we have not won a game of football this season.

"We are where we are and my focus is on St Mirren on Saturday. There was a good energy, good vibe, about the group this morning and I am looking forward to working with them."

Critchley said he had watched Hearts games this season and was "super excited and very honoured" to have been confirmed in the post at what he called a "fantastic football club".

He is aware that some will not welcome his arrival, but added: "I am here to make this club successful."

Without giving too much away, the new boss said that Hearts need to improve at both ends of the pitch and is determined to snap the Jambos poor run of form. They have not won a game this season.

The new man declared that there are plenty of games in which Hearts can earn points and move up the William Hill Premiership.

MAIN PICTURE: Neil Critchley in the home dugout at Tynecastle.
Picture Nigel Duncan



