

Critchley up-beat about Hearts prospects

Up-beat Neil Critchley said a lot of people have wished him well since his appointment at Tynecastle was confirmed.

And the Crewe-born coach told success-hungry Hearts fans that he believes their favourites can climb the William Hill Premiership, hopefully starting on Saturday when St Mirren arrive at Tynecastle (15.00).

The club's new men's head coach, who said he has watched a number of Hearts games this season, has now overseen two training sessions with others on Thursday and Friday and is "super excited" at the prospect.

He arrived after a rigorous process which involved using analytics and also a number of conversations between a panel and players who have worked with the new coach.

Critchley said: "It is a huge responsibility at a fantastic football club and it is a challenge. There are plenty of points to play for and plenty of games to play.

"We know where we are at, we know what we need to do, and I concentrate on what I have responsibilities for and what I can control.

"For what I have seen, and what I have studied and analysed, I am encouraged by what we still can do this season.

"We are where we are and my focus is purely on St Mirren on

Saturday. The rest will take care of itself and, hopefully, over the next weeks and months we can move up the table and get to where we can get to.”

You learn, he said, from all experiences, good and bad, and you reflect on all of them. Critchley added: “I will use that to, hopefully, make me better in the future. Through adversity you gain strength, and I am in a far better position now from what I have been through.

“I hope to use that now to my benefit and transfer that to the people I have responsibility every day for which is the staff and the players.”

MEET THE MEDIA: Neil Critchley at Tynecastle. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***