

Critchley: 'too many under par performances'

Neil Critchley summed up Hearts performance in the Derby in one short sentence: "We were not good enough."

And the Englishman (pictured by *Thomas Brown*) declared that there were "too many under par performances" from his men in the 2-1 defeat at Tynecastle on Boxing Day.

Dwight Gayle's late strike, a superb finish the former Newcastle striker, saw Hearts slip back into the bottom two in the 12-strong table with 16 points, two more than bottom-markers, St Johnstone, and two fewer than Sunday's opponents, Ross Country. All have played 19 games.

Sunday's trip to Dingwall in the William Hill Premiership therefore becomes a must-win for the Jambos and Critchley will demand more from his squad.

The coach did not feel his players did enough against Hibs who now move up to seventh position with 21 points already in the bag from 19 fixtures.

Critchley felt his squad played in spells on Boxing Day but added: "In a game like this, that is not enough."

Asked if this display would prompt a move into the transfer market when the window opens in January, Critchley told BBC Sport Scotland: "We are always looking to try and improve and there are parts of the squad which needs to be re-enforced."

The coach admitted that, at the moment, he is not finding solutions to the current inconsistency from within.

Different permutations of different players have been tried, but he said: "We can do it for one game and we can do it within a game but not from game to game and that is not going to get us where we want to be.

"If you want to play for this football club, and get us to where we want to go, we need players with the mentality and quality to produce on a regular basis."

Critchley is still learning about the group of players he inherited from former head coach, Steven Naismith, and, crucially, learning which ones are going to around of the long journey and the ones who won't be.

Performances on the pitch, he said, answer many of his questions and, at the moment, Hearts have players who perform well within in one game and then not quite as well in the next game and that's not good enough for the ambitious former Blackpool boss.