

Clark tops Jambos class with medal double

Neil Critchley revealed that he asked for a show of hands in the Hearts' dressing room this week to find out who had won medals in their career.

Goalkeeper Zander Clark certainly put his hand up, having secured Scottish and League Cup winners' medals in May 2021 during an 11-year career at St Johnstone.

The head coach did not reveal to the media briefing who else did, but added that "not many" others were forthcoming.

It was in May 2012 that the Jambos lifted the famous trophy, with 51,041 watching in Glasgow, beating Capital rivals, Hibs, 5-1, and the English-born boss is acutely aware of that date.

For the record, Darren Barr, Daniel Grainger, Ryan McGowan and a double from Rudolf Skacel secured the cup on a memorable day.

Now, 13 year on, Critchley would love to lead his men to Hampden Park and the Scottish Gas, Scottish Cup represents the only avenue for the Tynecastle team to annex silverware this term.

That's why Friday's televised tie at Glebe Park against Highland League club, Brechin City, is so important to the club and Critchley would not give any clues to his team selection ahead of the game.

However, Hearts' staff, including kitman Gordon Paterson, who started working for the club in the shop in 1992, have reminded him of that win and Critchley pledged to do everything he can to prepare the team for what could be a tricky tie.

Hearts are in good form, but the cameras are there for a reason, to see a cup shock and ambitious Critchley does not want to be in the headlines and heading out of the competition just yet.

The former Blackpool boss certainly does not want a repeat of the shock defeat in March, 2021, when Hearts tumbled out of the cup to minnows Brora Rangers who created one of the biggest shocks in the long history of the competition.

The Jambos lost 2-1 at Dudgeon Park in the second round thanks to a goal from Martin McKean with 15 minutes of normal time remaining.

Critchley assured the media that The Men in Maroon have done their homework on the opposition, who top the Highland League, and he added: "They've (Breachin) lost only once in the league and that breeds confidence. We're under no illusions about the task ahead of us."

PICTURE: Zander Clark in training at Riccarton. Picture by ***Nigel Duncan***