

Critchley expects 'tough' test at St Johnstone

Neil Critchley believes the William Hill Premiership clash at St Johnstone on Sunday (noon) will be a tough test as the other clashes so far this season have been tight.

The head coach does not expect anything different with the Perth club scrapping for points to get off the bottom of the 12-strong table and back into the pack.

Critchley (pictured by *Nigel Duncan*) told a media briefing at The Oriam that the Saints have been in good form lately. They did, however, suffered a setback last weekend but the Englishman feels this game will be a real challenge away from Tynecastle.

Team news now and Cammy Devlin, who missed Sunday's home defeat by Rangers, has been back in training after being under concussion protocol following the Scottish Gas, Scottish Cup win at St Mirren.

The cobative Aussie midfielder will be given as much time as is possible to see if he can make the game and Critchley is hopeful.

Yan Dhanda is not ready and Stephen Kingsley, Frankie Kent and Craig Halkett are recovering but the head coach said it would be several weeks before they would be ready.

Critchley looked ahead to next week when Hearts have a triple-header, away to St Johnstone, home to St Miren on Wednesday

(19.45) and at Easter Road to face Hibs on Sunday, March 2 (12.30).

He confirmed that he would have to manage the squad to get through the series and he will change the team if he has to. He added: "We have seven games until the split and we want to be a team competing at the top end of the league.

"There are nine points to play for and the league could look a lot different in ten days time."