

# Do Hearts have what it takes to make it into the top six?

The season will culminate with Hearts going up against St. Mirren and Motherwell for that final spot in the top six before the season splits. However, many are questioning if Hearts actually have what it takes to make it into the top six this season following defeat to Dundee United on the weekend.

Since Hearts have returned to the Scottish Premier League they have not finished outside of the top six (the past three seasons), however, that record could be about to disappear if they fail to beat fellow challengers Motherwell.

**Can Hearts make the top six then, and what needs to happen for them to do that?**

[Neil Critchley's men](#) have been underwhelming at times this season and with the squad they have should not be relying on the final game to sneak into the top six split. However, this is where they are and need to have a big performance against Motherwell to convince The Jambos faithful.

As stated, Hearts must beat Motherwell on the weekend to guarantee their place in the top six but they can also sneak into that final spot if they draw with Motherwell at Fir Park on Saturday but only if St. Mirren draw themselves or lose to Ross County.

[It is very much in Hearts' hands to get into the top six](#) and they will be wanting to join Celtic, Rangers (who will be focusing on their Europa League tie with Athletic Bilbao; [Europa League tickets are still available on Ticket-Compare](#)), fellow city rivals Hibernian, Aberdeen and Dundee United. However, many are just not sure they have what it takes but head coach Critchley is staying confident and feels as long as they do their job then they have what it takes.

“If we win, we’re there,” Hearts head coach Neil Critchley said after the United defeat. “We know what to do. That’s what we’ll be concentrated on.

“We’ll be going to Motherwell doing everything we can to win. You’ve got to thrive in those moments as show what you’re about. We’re looking forward to it.”



Photo by [Winston Tjia](#) on [Unsplash](#)

### **Concerns with Critchley’s side**

Head coach Critchley is facing criticism for how he is approaching games; just like he has throughout his managerial career. There is no doubt that Critchley can get players playing tidy and neat football, much of what he learnt whilst at Liverpool with the under 21s and under the tutelage of Jurgen Klopp, however one thing he is not known for is knowing when to adapt a game.

Like many managers in the modern game, he has a certain philosophy and a way of playing. There is a fine line with

this because when it works managers will get praised but when it is not working they will be rightly criticised. Football is a results business and even if you are playing attractive football but not getting results then things need to change.

This run in for Hearts feels reminiscent of his time at Blackpool where he failed to make the play offs with a strong squad in League One. Whilst there he also failed to adapt in how he plays against certain sides and in certain situations.

However, like he has stated they just need to concentrate on their own game and destiny is in their hands.

### **Who needs to step up for Hearts?**

It is evident from the Dundee United game that the defence needs to stay tight. The centre back pairing allowed too much time for Dalby to finish and the setback killed Hearts. The experience of Craig Gordon in goal needs to be heard more and he will be a vital player on the weekend against Motherwell.

At the back, one player has been performing well, and that is left back James Penrice, who has been putting in some stellar performances, especially going forward. With two goals and four assists this season, he will be hoping to add to these stats in the final game.

However, it is evident Hearts need goals and chances needed to be created more regularly rather than sideways or backwards passing that has been seen in recent weeks. With young James Wilson suspended, it looks like the Scot Lawrence Shankland is in line for a starting position. Although considered more of a playmaker these days for Hearts, he may be required to step into the forward role in the absence of Wilson.

It comes down to one game, and a win against Motherwell will rejuvenate some fans who are unhappy. It will also help with the Jambos upcoming semi-final. However, Motherwell is first on the cards.