

Hearts show coach Critchley the door

Neil Critchley told BBC Sport Scotland just after the final whistle on Saturday at Tynecastle that he was the man to get Hearts out of their current situation, despite the recent poor run of form.

Less than three hours later the 46-year-old former midfield player was shown the door after only six months in the hot seat, along with his assistant, Mike Garrity.

The club issued a short, four paragraph statement, in which they thanked the Crewe-born head coach and Garrity for their efforts.

It was only 68 words long, in total contrast to the in-depth analytics which were used to recruit the former Liverpool youth coach who also worked with Steven Gerard at Aston Villa for a short spell.

Critchley, who has also managed at Blackpool and London-based, Queens Park Rangers, arrived in October and lifted the club up the table to sixth position, but the Men in Maroon failed to make the top six following a 0-0 draw at Motherwell.

The Jambos also exited Europe to unfancied Moldovan club Petrocub despite being in a good position in the Europa Conference League when he arrived, a Mudrac goal from the

penalty spot seven minutes from the end of normal time proving the killer blow.

And Critchley (pictured) failed to find a way to defeat Capital rivals Hibs in any of the three derby games this season, losing 2-1 twice and drawing the other 1-1. Hibs are riding high in the top six of the William Hill Premiership, not something which fans of the Men in Maroon wish to see.

Recently, nine-man Hearts were beaten by Aberdeen with only two minutes of extra time remaining in the semi-final of the Scottish Gas, Scottish Cup at Hampden. The powerbrokers at Gorgie had seen enough and could not have failed to notice the dissatisfaction of fans at the final whistle against Dundee.

Liam Fox will take control of the first team in an interim basis.

The statement posted on the Hearts official web page said: "Heart of Midlothian can confirm that it has today parted company with head coach, Neil Critchley, and his assistant, Mike Garrity.

"The club would like to thank Neil and Mike for their efforts during their time in Gorgie and we wish them well for the future."

Hearts said no further comment would be made at this time but in 35 matches in all competitions, Critchley won 14 and lost 14.

Tellingly, the Jambos have scored only one goal in their last five matches in all competitions and the 1-0 defeat to Dundee at Tynecastle on Saturday sees them slip to eighth in the 12-strong table with 40 points, five points above the relegation play-off spot currently occupied by Ross County.

There are only four games left and the Jambos are two points adrift of Motherwell who now top the relegation section with

Kilmarnock on 38 points and Dundee on 37.