



EDINBURGH DERBY 3 days to go

I'M THE SPECIAL No 1

Balogh vows to hold down job for keeps



JANOS BALOGH has revealed he would **QUIT** Hearts if he didn't think he was good enough to be **No 1**.

The keeper has no intention of throwing down his gloves any time soon – because he believes he **IS** better than Marian Kello and Jamie MacDonald.

He aims to prove it by keeping Hibs at bay in Saturday's Edinburgh derby, then holding down a regular place in Jim Jefferies' first team.

Positive

Balogh's situation at Tynecastle looked bleak last month after the departure of Csaba Laszlo and arrival of Jefferies.

The Hungarian was the **ONLY** player Laszlo paid a transfer fee for in his 18-month spell, joining in a £200,000 deal from Debrecen last season.

He immediately handed his countryman the 1 jersey while Kello was forced to accept being No 25. But an injury to Balogh meant Kello started JJ's first games and the Slovakian's positive displays made an immediate impression.

Kello, though, damaged his wrist in training, opening the door for a fully-fit Balogh to return at the end of February.

Now the 27-year-old is sure he has what it takes to see off the challenge of Kello and MacDonald and keep his place until the end of the season.

He said: "I believe I am the No 1 goalkeeper – of course. If I didn't believe this I would have to finish with football!"

"This is a big chance for me. We have a big game against Hibs coming up but all I can do is try and save shots and catch crosses."



"I will just try to be calm and play well. I believe in the team and I believe in myself.

"I was sad when Csaba left as we came from the same country and I liked him not only as a manager but as a person.

"But this is the life of a footballer. You have to look forward, not back, and we'll see how the new manager gets on.

"I like Jim Jefferies as well so things are OK."

Balogh's weekend appearance against Motherwell was his 17th of the campaign. When Kello, *right*, got injured he had already featured 16 times.

Relax

Balogh admitted it was difficult sitting on the bench after returning to full fitness shortly following Jefferies' arrival.

He said: "Sometimes that is hard to deal with.

"If you are not the first choice, when you do get a chance you have to play very hard and try and show the manager you must be in goal.

"Sometimes that is good because if you play well then it can build your confidence.

"The problem is you are not able to relax and you start to think if you make a mistake

you might end up back out of the side. I don't think Jim Jefferies is a manager who will change the goalkeepers all the time.

"He told me that Marian had played well in his first games and I would have to wait.

"It was lucky for me but unfortunate for Marian that he got injured and now I feel I can stay in goal.

"Of course it was a difficult time but I **NEVER** gave up, I trained hard and waited for my opportunity.

"I got it, but I am a little bit unsatisfied so far because I have been back for three games and we have lost two of them. So I think we have to win against Hibs now."

Hearts' hopes of a top six place were dented by Saturday's 3-1 loss at Fir Park.

But Balogh is convinced they will be in the top half of the table after the split and then mount a late push to qualify for Europe.

The keeper was speaking at the launch of a new Hearts Breakfast Club initiative with Nairn's Oatcakes and Aegon in Edinburgh. He said:

"We want to

be in the top six and I hope we can finish in the top four.

"If we can do that we can go into the Europa League again.

"We know if we can win this weekend we can close the gap and we would still have eight games left to change things.

"The problem is our team this season has had two faces – we can win three games in a row and then lose the next three.

Important

"The Edinburgh derby is the biggest game of the season for the fans and the players and we are looking forward to it.

"I always enjoy playing in derbies. They are one-off games and we know we have to win against Hibs **EVERY** time, it doesn't matter how.

"It doesn't matter how we play or how nice the football is, the only thing that is important is the win. I've played Hibs four times and I have a lot of good memories. The team has played well and I've made good saves."

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YOU GOTTA TAKE BOOS

JOHN HUGHES has told his Hibs players they have to handle the flak after they were jeered off after Saturday's draw with Ross County.

Defender Ian Murray

By **ROBERT MARTIN**

was unhappy at the fans' reaction, even exchanged words with a few.

But Hibs boss Yogi said: "I can totally under-

stand the fans' frustrations at the end because it was a big game for us.

"I don't want to patronise the supporters but this is their club, not ours. They will be around

a lot longer than the players, that's for sure."

Hughes will find out today if he's won his appeal against a six-match ban.



HEARTY MEAL
...Balogh tucks in with help from Jamie Robertson and Elesha George

