Mendes praises Rangers spirit after title triumph

Portuguese savours SPL title

Rangers midfielder Pedro Mendes has hailed the character shown by his team, after the Glasgow club clinched the Scottish Premier League title this weekend.

The celebrations marked the end of what had been a turbulent year for the Ibrox club, who after being eliminated from the Champions League qualifiers, struggled with financial problems during the course of the season. Indeed, the situation was so severe that top goalscorer Kris Boyd was offered to other clubs during the January transfer window.

At that stage, the club trailed bitter rivals Celtic by seven points at the top of the SPL table, but Mendes and his team-mates managed to reel in the champions and snatch the title, which was confirmed as the former Porto man scored in a 3-0 victory at Dundee United on Sunday.

"Around the time of the transfer window in January there was a lot of speculation around the club and I have to admit it was not easy," Mendes told the Daily Record. "However, that only served to show the strength of the fantastic group of lads we have at Rangers.

"Lots of things happen during the season, there has been a lot of criticism of this squad and the pressure has been on but we always kept going and we deserved this for the way we've come through it.

"It wasn't easy to be so far behind but we stayed together and in the end we can say we are the champions. I had a great belief in the team. There were spells in the season we didn't perform as well as we wanted, the criticism was there and the pressure was on.

"We knew we had to roll our sleeves up and that's what we did. We applied the pressure and it was enough. We had to hope Celtic would drop points and that's what happened but I also think the win over Celtic at Ibrox earlier this month was crucial.

"Celtic were ahead of us twice and people told us it was over but we have strong characters. We kept going, we stuck together - and deserve the title."

"We are back in the Champions League and that is massive. Everyone tells me how big European nights at Ibrox are. They tell me how special they are. I had a little flavour when AC Milan were here at the start of the year and I want to savour more."