

# Hibs fly to Holland for pre-season tour



Hibs flew out from Edinburgh Airport today for a four match pre-season tour, incorporating Holland, Belgium and Germany with matches against Jupiler League clubs, Lierse SK and OHV Leuven before playing against the Zeeland Select team and then finally an 800km trip to the German capital to face 2.Bundesliga side Union Berlin.

The squad will be based in the Dutch seaside town of Vlissingen in the south-west part of the Netherlands.

The first game is tomorrow night against Lierse SK who finished twelfth in the Jupiler League last year. The club have a famous history, winning both the league title and Belgian cup in the 1990s. They currently boast some quality players including Egypt internationalist striker Mohamed El-Gabbas.

The next game is three days later on Saturday night, when Pat Fenlon's men take on OHV Leuven v at Den Dreef Stadium, Leuven. The city is the home of Stella Artois which is likely to be of interest to the travelling supporters. The team were crowned Division Two champions during the 2010/11 season – bringing top flight football to Leuven for the first time since 1950, and managed to retain their place in the Jupiler League last season which is a massive achievement for the up-and-coming club. The squad has Icelandic internationalist Stefan Gislason, formerly with Arsenal, on their books.

There will be no rest period for the squad as the next game is at 2.30pm the following day, Sunday 22 July when Hibs play a Zeeland Select at Sportcomplex, Vlissinge.

Zeeland is a province in the Netherlands which incorporates a number of Dutch islands which border Belgium. The towns of Temeuzen, Middleburg and Vlissingen are all based in the province and the best local players will feature for Zeeland Select.

Two days later, on Tuesday 24 July 2012, Hibs will take on Union at Stadion An der Alte Försterei.

The club were German champions in 1923, and became a powerhouse in East German football and developed a strong rivalry with Dynamo Berlin. Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, Union have not enjoyed as much success, but were German Cup runner's up in 2001 and qualified for the UEFA Cup.

Union Berlin are currently in the second tier of German football, but have some quality players such as Brazilian striker Silvio, who used to play for Santos.

The team will return to Scotland after the tour, in time to prepare for the friendly with Huddersfield Town on Saturday 28 July at Easter Road.

Kick off times and directions are available on the official [Hibernian FC website](#).

Before the trip, flying winger Ivan Sproule told the Edinburgh Reporter about his hopes for the coming season.

He said:- "It's going to be a rebuilding process with the number of players who have left since the cup final but it's a fresh start. We've got a number of young boys, some of whom have been here for a while who have progressed through the youth team so the squads a bit light at the minute but it's going to be a building process from now until the end of the season. I think the new additions the gaffer has brought in have been very good and if he can bring in another three or four hopefully we can give it a push again."