

Hibs unveil new signing



Hibs announced their fourth summer signing today in former Manchester United and Colchester goalkeeper Ben Williams.

The 29 year-old was introduced at a press conference ahead of today's game against Rapid Bucharest, even though he will not play due to a lack of match fitness.

Williams said that he has heard good things about the club from former team-mates John Rankin and Darren Fletcher, and is delighted to join Pat Fenlon's men. Although he was paraded with the number one jersey, he admits that he has not been guaranteed a place in the team, and manager Pat Fenlon confirmed that the offer to out of contract Mark Brown remains on the table.

Williams spent four years at Old Trafford which included several loan spells at Coventry City and Chesterfield and Crewe Alexander. At United, he was third choice behind Tim Howard and Roy Carroll, although his time did overlap with Fabien Barthez and Mark Bosnich which limited his chances.

Although he never made a first team appearance for Manchester United, he was on the bench for two Champion's League games and several Premier League matches, before deciding to leave to gain more experience.

He then spent four years with Crewe Alexander before moving to Carlisle on a Bosman free transfer. He spent a year with the Cumbria club before signing for Paul Lambert's Colchester United for a reported £60,000, where he became a fans' favourite winning three Player of the Season Awards, including both the home and away player of the year awards as voted for by fans and also the Official Player of the Year Award.

The 6ft tall keeper revealed that he chose Hibs despite interest from Championship sides as he wants regular first team football. He said:- "I have friends at Hibs who all said that the training ground and history was geared up for a top four side. I want to be involved in pushing the club to where it should be"

Manager Pat Fenlon said the he was "delighted" with the signing. He said "I've been working away at it for a while and it's great to get another one over the line. It was vitally important that we got a goalkeeper in and an experienced one as well and he fits the bill for what we are looking for. He's an experienced player and has played a lot of games and the type of character he is as well. He's a decent goalkeeper who has played at a very good standard. I actually watched him when I was the manager at Bohs and a few times last season."

Williams' arrival does not mean the end for Mark Brown who finished last season as first choice goalkeeper, and Fenlon confirmed that he is still hopeful that he will remain at the club.

"We've spoken to Mark (Brown) over the last two or three weeks and that's on-going and it's now at the stage of the agent talking to the board so we will have to wait and see."

The manager also revealed that the reason for the departure of last year's assistant manager Bill Brown was entirely down to finance. He said:- "When I came in Billy was fantastic and was a tremendous help to me last season but it's just something that we couldn't do. You work with people day to day and build up a relationship so it (breaking the news) was a hard thing to do. There was nothing personal in it but you have to make the best decisions on behalf of the club."

He also revealed that he has not watched the Cup Final and has no intention of doing so. For him it was a shame that the season didn't end with the 4-0 victory in front of a packed

Easter Road which ensured SPL survival, and would have left the fans with a feel good factor over the summer months, but the cup final defeat meant that did not happen.

Fenlon is well aware that improvements are required and that another bottom six season is unacceptable.

“Everybody talks about Hibs being a big club, but we have to go and prove that and that’s what I have been working on. We were in the bottom six last year and we’ve got to be in the top six and that’s it.”

He also confirmed that Mark Kerr and Alan Maybury have been training with the club for one week, but both have other options and he is not in a position to make them any offers at the moment although that may change.

Hibs are hoping to play Rapid Bucharest at Grangemouth where the Romanian club have been training, but the game is in doubt due to a waterlogged pitch and an inspection will take place later today.