

Former Premiership star Shefki Kuqi joins Hibs



Shefki Kuqi, the former Sheffield Wednesday, Blackburn Rovers and Newcastle United target man has become Pat Fenlon's eighth summer signing.

Speculation has been rife since Sunday when Kuqi was spotted in the West Stand for the derby against Hearts, and last night the club formally announced that the Finnish international striker had put pen to paper on a one year deal. The 6ft 3in Kosovan born target man told Hibernian TV that the atmosphere on Sunday had blown him away.

Kuqi said: "That was my first taste of Scottish football and I was overwhelmed by the passion and enthusiasm shown by the Hibernian supporters. Even when Hibernian went a goal down, the crowd kept backing the team and were rewarded with a good performance – that definitely impressed me. If the players and supporters can work together then I believe we can enjoy some good times at Hibernian and I'm excited about the next challenge in my career.

"I've played all around Europe and in some top leagues such as the Premiership in England and now I'm looking forward to the challenge of playing in the SPL. The Hibernian team is still developing and I'm excited about using the experience I've gained to help the team get to where we need to be."

A former Finland internationalist – Kuqi has been capped 62 times – the ex-Oldham striker hopes he can make an impact at Easter Road.

"Hopefully the supporters will recognise that I will give my all for the benefit of the team and that I will score some

goals.”

A delighted Pat Fenlon said he was pleased to conclude the transfer and believes Kuqi’s arrival will give the squad a massive boost.

Fenlon said: “We pinpointed the forward department as an area that urgently needed strengthening, but it was crucial that we made the right signing. With Shefki, what you see is what you get – he is an old fashioned target man, who can hold the ball up and get his head on the end of corners. He offers us something totally different to what we had before and his wealth of knowledge will not only help the team right away, but also help the development of our young strikers such as Ross Caldwell and Danny Handling.

“He is yet another strong-minded player and a good character, who will have a massive part to play for us this season.”

Meanwhile, Fenlon has also told the players that they must forget the derby and concentrate on the forthcoming game against St Mirren at New Love Street on Saturday.

He said: “We can’t get carried away. Sunday was an acceptable performance but that’s what we expect now. People said we did well, which is great to get a pat on the back but that’s what we should be doing and we should be doing it on a regular basis.

“The game against Hearts becomes a good result if we can back it up at the next game, that’s the important thing, if not it just becomes a memory for people to enjoy themselves. I watched St Mirren against Inverness and watched them last week as well. They are a good side. They’ve lost one or two but you always know what you’ll get with Danny’s teams. They want to pass the ball and they’ve had a decent start to the season. It’ll be a tough test for us.”

He also confirmed that he will be back in the dugout for the

game after completing a two match ban for making a gesture to Hearts fans at the cup final, but he claimed that watching matches from the elevated seat in the stand gave him a better view of what was happening on the pitch.

He continued: "I discussed that with Liam at the weekend and he said that he doesn't want to be doing what he's been doing for the last two weeks, so I'll have to be back in the dugout although it's an eye opener as well as you can see different things from up in the stand and you can change things a bit quicker so that's something we may look at, spending some time in the stand and some time on the bench."