

# Hibs' Irish duo aim to make first team breakthrough this season



Hibs have always prided themselves in giving youngsters a chance, but the numbers that have broken through from last years' under 20s is unprecedented. Alex Harris, Ross Caldwell, Danny Galbraith, Jordon Forster, Sam Stanton, Dean Horribine and Bradley Donaldson have regularly featured in the first team squads, however many of the fans who follow the under 20s believe that the current crop of teenagers are even better than their counterparts from last year.

Amongst the players who are already catching the eye are Irish pair Cody Mulhall from Athy Co Kildare and Gareth McCaffrey from Dublin who have both made an impressive start to their Hibs career, with Cody a regular name on the score-sheet whilst Gareth scored the winner in the Foyle Cup final in Derry last month.

Both are enjoying their time in the Hibs' Academy and the pair have ambitions to progress to the first team by the end of the season, like team-mate Jason Cummings who was on the bench at the weekend against Kilmarnock.

Cody has just returned to the club after his selection for the Ireland Under 19 squad where he was an unused substitute in the 2-1 defeat to Norway. Last year, he was an ever-present for the Ireland Under 17 side and featured in all ten fixtures, scoring against Azerbaijan in two games and again against Romania, and the youngster who turned 17 this week told Hibernian TV: "It was a proud moment to represent your country, but I'm happy to get in and hopefully stay in and make sure I'm there for the European Championships

qualifiers.”

When asked about whether he was enjoying his time in Edinburgh, Cody said: “It’s great, I’m loving it here. It’s different from over in Ireland. Over there we trained twice a week but full time football’s much better over here. It’s tough being away from your family though, but playing football and being in every day is much better than being at home and being here with Gareth is much easier than being on your own.

“Gareth and I have known each other for five years and playing out on the pitch you can see that some things just click. When he’s homesick I can help and when I’m homesick he can help so it makes it much easier than being on your own.

“Our goal is to play in the first team if we can and be in and around the first team by the end of the season at least, and train with them as much as we can and play as much as we can hopefully.”

Gareth echoed Cody’s comments and said: “It’s a big step up from Irish football, the tempo and everything is much better. We had nothing like the facilities we have here back home and I think the two of us as players have improved because of that and having each other over here makes it much better dealing with homesickness and we are settling in very well.

“The Foyle Cup was an amazing experience and it was a great team effort as well. The lads put in the effort all week and luckily I happened to be the one who scored the goal which gave us the cup. To be even mentioned in the same sentence as the great Lawrie Reilly in the match report was an honour for me but as a team it was a great effort from everybody. A lot of my family were there so they were pleased with how I got on.

The pair revealed that it was Pat Fenlon who spotted their potential and enticed them across the Irish Sea.

Gareth continued: "I played for Shelbourne for a few years before Stella Maris and for the last two seasons I have played alongside Cody although through international football I have known him for five years so I am used to him by this stage.

"Pat Fenlon watched us play a few times for Stella Maris and I think he felt that we were good enough to come over and try and prove ourselves and we were on trial a couple of times and I think the club felt that we were ready to make the move to full time football."