

Hibs' youngsters begin winter training camp in Turkey



Hibs' under-20s began their first day of their winter training camp in Turkey at the weekend, in glorious sunshine on the training pitches at the Kremlin Palace Hotel in Antalya.

The trip is being funded through the Leonardo da Vinci scheme and over the next two weeks, the players will train on a twice daily basis as they prepare for the second half of their SPFL U20 League and East of Scotland campaigns.

Several other clubs are based at the hotel and the dining room at meal times is awash with the colours of teams from Belgium, Holland, Italy and Turkey.

Later in the week Hibernian's under-20 squad will attend the Galatasary against Ajax match which is part of the Antalya Winter Cup.

The players will attend the match and improve on their match analysis skills by focusing their attention on the players who play in their position and producing a match report for Head of Academy Coaching, James McDonough.

McDonough believes the overseas trip will be hugely beneficial to the group after a 46-game start to the season, in all competitions, but also a sombre experience with the squad still all coming to terms with the fact team-mate and friend David Paul tragically passed last month.

McDonough told the club website: "The trip will be really beneficial to the squad and will help to lift the players after we sadly lost David.

"The two weeks together as a group has come at a great time

for us; we need to get back to working hard and playing football.”

The Leonardo da Vinci Scheme also helped fund the transport to the Galatasary-Ajax game and the purchase of match tickets. The under-20s will also play a minimum of one friendly match with full details to be announced in due course.

At this point in the campaign, Hibs’ under-20s are top of both the SPFL U20 League table, the Central Taxis First Division and the East of Scotland Qualifying Group – scoring a phenomenal 148 goals in the process.

Following the training camp, the team are next in action away to St Mirren on Wednesday 22 January in the SPFL U20 League and McDonough says his players will be ready for the re-start.

He said: “The players are looking forward to it; we know we’re leading the league at Christmas but we don’t expect to win the under-20 league. That’s not even the objective to be honest.

“If we can win it then it would be fantastic, but we just want to get somebody else in the first-team and we’re going to try our best to achieve that.”