

Sam Stanton keen to impress for Under 21s



Hibs' midfielder Sam Stanton is hoping to continue with his impressive run of form when Scotland Under-21s take on Hungary at Tannadice Park on Wednesday night.

The 19-year-old made his first appearance of the season against Celtic in January and has maintained his place in the first-team since, notching his first senior goal against Raith Rovers in the William Hill Scottish Cup in February. He also scored in Hibs' 2-1 league win over Ross County last month.

His form caught the attention of Scotland Under-21 coach Billy Stark, who has included him in his squad for tomorrow night's friendly.

Stanton said: "I've loved every minute of first-team football at my club and just want to keep going now.

"My target now is to keep my place in the first team and to play as much football as I can, be that for Hibs or the national team.

"I had no idea I was in line for a call up to the squad but it's obviously great to be involved.

"Not so long ago I was playing for the under-20s team at Hibs.

"We had a few injuries and a suspension and the gaffer told me he was impressed with how I had been playing for the under-20s and with how I was doing in training and gave me a start against Celtic.

"Since then, I've maintained my place in the team and also

been called up to the under-21s so it has been a good few months for me and I'm enjoying my football."

After making his first-team debut in 2012 in a league match against Rangers, Stanton was sent on loan to Cowdenbeath to gain more first-team experience, but a knee injury put his development on hold for six months after just two appearances at the Blue Brazil.

He said: "I made a few appearances from the bench for Hibs two years ago and was then sent out on loan to Cowdenbeath but I picked up injury in training which put me out for a few months.

"It was really bad injury at the time but thankfully everything is OK now and I'm involved in the Hibs team again."

Scotland's friendly with Hungary will be their last match before their UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualifier with the Netherlands in May.

With just three qualifying matches remaining, Scotland will require a victory over the Dutch to give them a realistic shot at reaching the play-offs later this year.

Although Stanton has yet to earn his first under-21 appearance, he is hopeful of featuring for Scotland later in the year.

He continued: "I would love to get a run out against Hungary tomorrow night and earn my first under-21 cap but I want to stay involved and show what I can do here.

"There are a lot of other players in the squad that are in the same situation as me so it's important I do as well as I can.

"Billy Stark has already spoken to me about my game, what he likes about me and where he thinks I can improve.

"I'm focussed on the Hungary match and we'll see what happens

after that.”

Entry to Scotland’s friendly with Hungary is by cash gate and priced at £5 for adults and £2 for kids.

Photo by John Preece

<http://www.photoboxgallery.com/jlp-photography>