

Leeann Dempster's football vision



Leeann Dempster today laid out her football vision as she combines searching for a new manager to take the Club forward.

Key aspects will include a big increase in Hibernian grassroots football, a review and evaluation of the Academy structure, including appointment of George Craig, the creation of individual development plans for elite young players to assist transition from Academy to First Team, a structured and strategic player pathways between Academy and Under 20s and First Team, the Introduction of a holistic performance athlete development plan to support the physical development of players and a structured and fully resourced player identification and recruitment process for players joining the club at all ages.

Underpinning this will be a desire to develop a common style of play, based on attractive attacking football.

The new CEO said; "As I told the Working Together meeting, myself and George will be developing and writing both Football and Non-Football plans for the Club. While these will be internal Club documents, I think it is positive that supporters should have an understanding of what we are going to do.

"Starting from the absolute grass roots, we need to get more kids playing football in Hibernian strips. That means a genuine football role for the Foundation, in developing bigger programmes to involve more children in football. Apart from getting youngsters more active it has two big effects – it creates a bigger talent pool for us to choose from, and it also creates Hibernian supporters of the future.

“We have signed a collaboration agreement with Spartans aimed at creating the best development pathway for young football players in Scotland.

“The landmark agreement was officially announced on Friday, and it will see the best youngsters developed by Spartans progress through a jointly run Transition Academy.

“In particular, the Hibernian & Spartans Transition Academy will initially focus on the development of the most promising 8-11 year olds identified by coaches from the two clubs within a joint set-up, administered by a joint Board.”

Ms Dempster is also keen to ensure that the Hibernian Academy enhances its efforts to produce talented footballers who can progress through the ranks into the First Team Squad.

She continued: “We need to ensure that we have the best coaching syllabus, individual development programmes, diet and fitness advice, to ensure that our ,most talented young players are given all the help they need to become not only talented footballers but genuine athletes.

“Also, we need to ensure that measures are in place to assist the young players in our Academy programme to continue to develop academically and as good citizens. An extensive player exit policy will form part of the Academy programme to assist our young players who are not going to achieve the required standard and be offered a professional contract at Hibernian FC. This will allow them to leave the Academy in a way that still sees them gain genuine benefits from their time with us.

“We need to ensure all of our players understand the importance of sports science and other modern performance enhancing methods now being introduced at the top level of the game. Football is now a high performance sport played by professional athletes.

“In order to perform at the very highest levels of the game a

player now has to fully support his ability and potential as a footballer with the power, pace and endurance levels of a top performance athlete.

“Only the sport is different, the principles are the same! An extra yard of pace or increased physical endurance could make the difference between winning or losing or between a long and successful career or a career of injury or missed opportunity.

“In addition we will be putting all kinds of additional support in place – around social media training, media training and so on. We need to ensure our players understand their responsibilities to the Club and the supporters.

“We also have to improve our Player identification and recruitment at Academy level – and by that we need a more structured and resourced recruitment plan, particularly in our own area. It is not acceptable to lose out on talented local boys leaving to go to other Scottish clubs or beyond.”

“If we do that, all of these small things will add up to something very significant in terms of Hibernian developing better footballers, athletes and professionals.”