

Hibs' star Lizzie Arnot looking forward to Netherlands game



Scotland Women's Under-19 midfielder Lizzie Arnot is looking forward to tonight's clash against the Netherlands in Norway, but insists the team are prepared for a tough encounter in Jessheim.

The Hibernian winger was influential in Scotland's victory over Belgium on Tuesday in their European Championship opener, a win which puts Scotland top of Group A going into the fixture.

Speaking from the team hotel in Lillestrøm, Arnot described the positive atmosphere within the Scotland camp.

"The build-up to tomorrow has been good" Arnot told the Scottish FA website.

"Despite being at a major finals, I think we are all quite relaxed. We never get worked up about things that are outwith our control. We just act the same, we are focussed for tomorrow but at the same time we are excited."

The win over Belgium was Scotland's first ever victory by a women's team at a major finals. Whilst Tuesday was a historic day for all concerned, the left-winger was keen to stress that the match is now in the past, with all of the players' focus on tomorrow's match.

"We take confidence from Tuesday's victory. The win was the first for a Scottish women's team at a major finals, which is something that we take belief and pride in.

“What we know and understand though is that tomorrow is a new game with new challenges. It’s a new game so we are not taking any for granted. Our feet are firmly on the ground.”

Tomorrow’s opponents provide a stern test, but not at alien one. Scotland played the Netherlands at the La Manga tournament, with Scotland securing a 2-2 draw thanks to a brace from Zoe Ness.

“We played the Netherlands in La Manga and it was a very tough game. We are under no illusions; they will be a tough opponent once more tomorrow.

“They are technically very good, and are skilful with the ball in possession. They are physically fit and fast also, but we can definitely match them in those departments. “

With the tournament in full-swing, the rest time between matches shortens is only two days. For some players, the lack of recovery time may be an issue. Arnot believes that this is not an issue for her and her Scotland teammates.

“I think we’re use to the frequency of games at a tournament like this. They come in thick-and-fast, and they fly by really quickly. I’ve played in tournaments in which the respite was shorter, so it is not a problem for us.”

I’ve been absolutely loving it here it has been such an enjoyable experience, The facilities have been great, and representing Scotland at a major tournament has just been amazing.

Arnot is one of five Hibernian players in the Scotland squad, along with Jenna Fife, Lucy Graham, Megan Cunningham and Katey Turner. Having so many players from club in the squad who know how each other play is beneficial, but Arnot insists that the contributes to a greater club-like dynamic within the Scotland squad.

“It helps obviously that so many of us play together on a week-in, week-out basis. We’re close, but it doesn’t affect the team dynamic at all. Everyone in the team gets on with each other really well, there are no cliques within the squad.

“It is roughly the same group of players who have played throughout qualification from the first round of matches in Macedonia to the Elite Round stage in Croatia to where we are today. It feels like we have all been on this journey together.”

It is a journey that Arnot is obviously keen to continue with the rest of the squad. A win against the Dutch would go a very long way to securing Scotland’s place in the semi-finals. As enticing a prospect as it, it has not shifted the focus of the squad.

“We’re aware that if we win tomorrow it allows us to continue our journey. As an exciting thought as it is, we’ve pushed it to the back of our minds. We’ve got a job to do, first.”

Photo from SFA