

# Five Academy players progress to Development Squad



Five Hibernian Academy players have progressed into the Development squad for the 2015/16 season – Ben Stirling, Kevin Waugh, Oliver Shaw, Alasdair Smith and Adam Watson.

Academy Coaching Manager Eddie May told the club website: “Overall this is very positive news – all these players stepped up to the mark over the course of the season and demonstrated their true worth to the squad.

“They did well at under-17 level and continued to excel when given the opportunity to play for the Development squad.

“The upcoming season will provide them all with a good learning curve and we look forward to seeing them continue their development at the football club.

“Ben (Stirling) came into the Development squad last season and did very well – he is capable of playing in a number of different positions; right-back, centre-half or in midfield.

“He plays for Scotland under-17s in midfield and has the capability to play at a very good level.

“He will be aiming to continue to make strides further forward during the upcoming season and to push Aaron Dunsmore for the right-back spot and eventually challenge for a first team place.

“Kevin (Waugh) can play either left-back or left centre-half and a lot of people at the football club believe he is best suited to the latter position.

“Joe McBride was extremely happy with him whenever he was

given the opportunity to feature for the Development squad last season.

“Very comfortable on the pitch – Kevin has great self-belief and determination.

“Oliver (Shaw) can play as a centre-forward or just behind in the ‘number 10’ position.

“He is very quick and very slight, but he’s got fantastic natural ability and he isn’t afraid to make mistakes.

“He scored a lot of goals at under-17 level and he’ll be aiming to build on that with the Development squad during the upcoming season.

“His Dad, Greg, played for Falkirk and Dunfermline and he has kept him grounded. Oliver is a very intelligent player with a fantastic attitude and he works hard to improve his game at all times

“Ali (Smith) plays a deeper role in midfield – he’s very physical, athletic and can use the ball well.

“During the upcoming season, hopefully he can use all his attributes and move forward.

“He overcame injuries to play very well for the under-17s. He is a ball-winning midfielder and I’m sure he’ll do very well playing against older players – he will meet that challenge

“Adam (Watson) is an attacking midfielder, who can play off the front at the top of the diamond.

“He has got great ability, takes people on and makes things open up in the final third. Again, Adam has got a fantastic attitude and just wants to learn.

“We’ve got high hopes for Adam – he excelled during the second part of last season.”

Meanwhile midfielders Jack Breen (born: 11.6.1999, Bellshill), Calum Donaldson (born: 22.10.1999, Edinburgh) and Fraser Murray (born: 7.5.1999, Glasgow) have all signed pro contracts, but will remain part of the under-17 squad before going full-time with the Development squad next season.