

Hibs' star Kirsty Smith looks back at exceptional year for club and country



2016 has proved to be an exceptional year for both Hibernian Ladies and the Scotland Women's national team.

Left back Kirsty Smith has been involved with both teams playing her part in Hibs winning two trophies, her first with the club, and making a sojourn into the UEFA Women's Champions League against Bayern Munich under the floodlights at Easter Road in front of a crowd of 2,551 – a record for a Ladies club game in Scotland.

Kirsty also help Scotland qualify for UEFA Euro 2017 in the Netherlands after the side finished second on goal difference behind Iceland.

Scotland have been drawn alongside England in Group D, with Portugal and Spain making up the four team group.

The match against the English is Scotland's tournament opener, which will be played in Utrecht.

Speaking about the last 12 months, Kirsty told the club website: "It was a great season and a special one for the team, and individually for myself.

"Winning the double, which is one of the most successful years I have had at senior level, they were my first two cups, so I think both of them were incredibly special.

"Winning the Scottish Cup at the same time as the men is also an excellent achievement, so I think from that point of view winning the cups was special.

“Experiencing Champions League football for the first time was amazing too and a great experience to have, so it has been a good season overall.

“For me, my personal highlight was winning the Scottish Cup. I’ve been here for quite a while now and that’s my first Scottish Cup win and that’s a really big cup that we wanted to win as a team. To win that for the first time was very special for me.

“We have developed from last season individually as players and I think we have grown as a squad. As a team, we are really close and that has helped us.

“We have also got a winning mentality now. From this season, having the two cup wins, we will look to push on to a better and stronger winning mentality in the next season and seasons to come.

“The women’s game has grown a lot, in the past there maybe wasn’t a lot of publicity, sometimes there wasn’t any at all.

“I think a lot of it has grown, social media has helped and I think having the Champions League also helped us personally. We had our biggest crowd there, which was an unbelievable experience as well, which helped and will grow the game.

“That’s what we need more of in the game. We need a lot more people interested and coming along to our games, but it is getting more popular.”

Of her involvement with Scotland, Kirsty said: “Being a part of the Scotland squad is an absolute privilege. There are players that have been there a while and to see their reaction when we qualified was amazing. It was amazing to be there and experience that.

“Personally, being part of the squad was amazing feeling when we qualified.

"I think what made it successful was that the Scotland Ladies have grown as a team. I think individually people have performed as well as they can.

"We had a point where we were defeated and wanted to prove that we can do better than we did and I feel that we done that, especially in the last game against Iceland.

"We ended it on a high when we qualified and everyone showed the potential that we have for going into the tournament next summer, so I think as a team we are really coming together and all want to achieve the same things and I think we are on track to hopefully perform as well as we want to at the tournament.

"It is a good group and a good draw that we got. A lot of people are highlighting the fact that we have England, so we have a very good opening game for us.

"Hopefully it will help to generate more publicity for the women's game, and I think that any group we would have got was going to be challenging, but I think if we prepare well and manage the team, I think we will be there to challenge all the teams in our group."

Photo by [John Preece](#)