

# Hibernian Ladies start pre-season training ahead of new campaign



Hibernian Ladies have started pre-season training preparing for pre-season matches against Heart of Midlothian, Hamilton Academical, Sunderland and Liverpool, before their defence of the Scottish Women's Premier League Cup begins in February.

Manager Chris Roberts told the club website: "After winning the Scottish Cup, the girls got the rest of November off, then we started training again in December, but it wasn't pre-season training.

"It's just there so that when we come into pre-season training we're not having to do a lot of maintenance work.

"The girls started on Thursday and will be in good condition and ready to go. They keep themselves really fit anyway.

"December is a good month for them to focus on strength and spending a little bit more time on gym work and power training.

"They can increase the number of strength sessions they do because there's not any games at that time of the year. It's just a little bit different from what I grew up getting used to where you take a break and come back in the middle of June for pre-season."

During the close season, Amy Gallagher joined Hibernian Ladies from Forfar Farmington whilst Ellis Notley and Shannon Leishman have been promoted into the first-team for 2017, after coming through the youth ranks.

Roberts continued: "Amy is a player that we've been tracking and following for the last two years now – she's a really exciting player.

"She's done a great job at Forfar, who were really unlucky to get relegated last season. The time was right for her and for us in terms of making the move.

"I would never wish it upon anybody, but I think going through a relegation can grow you as a person in terms of the grittiness, determination and the character building, for me, that is a learning curve.

"She doesn't need to change too much, and that's the beauty of her quality, she loves getting on the ball in the attacking third, she'll just need to get to terms with the way that we play and how we move the ball through the pitch.

"We don't want to bring anybody in on a whim because we've got an incredible academy at the club.

"When we do bring in a player, it could be at the expense of an academy player, so we do really need to know that it's the right fit because our academy is really important to us.

"The work that Alfie Smith and Connor Kirkland do with the Development Team is brilliant. It can actually be quite a thankless task sometimes being the "reserve team coach", but what they both get massively is that they are probably in one of the most important positions at the club.

"We take a lot of pride in our academy and Alfie and Conor deserve massive credit for the job that they do.

"If you look at the cup final, Jenna Fife has come through our academy, Clare Williamson has come through our academy, Siobhan Hunter, Joelle Murray and Kirsty Smith too – so that's our goalkeeper and back four that all came through our academy.

“Lisa Robertson, Lizzie Arnot, Ellis Notley, Shannon Leishman, Morgan Turner and Cailin Michie all came through the academy too. So easily 60% or 70% of the players in the team have either come through our academy, and it’s something that we are really proud of as a club.

“We want to make sure that we’re not overlooking young players who understand what it means to play for Hibs. We want them to get the opportunity to progress with us and play for the first-team.”