

Interview with a Scotland International – Scottish Hockey's Amy Brodie



Spain v Scotland

World Hockey 2 – Semi-final 11th Feb 2017

Spain 2 – Scotland 1

Having spent two weeks away with the Scotland Women's Hockey squad in Valencia at the start of February, The ER's Man-on-the-Spot, John Preece, had the opportunity to, not only see how an Elite International Sports' team operates from the inside, but to get to know a little about the players and coaching staff who make up one of Scotland's highest ranked International teams.

One of those 18 young women was Edinburgh born Amy Brodie – known simply as 'Brodie' with her team mates – and we 'interviewed' Amy, via e-mail, for the ER.

Our thanks should go to Amy for her time and effort, and also to Scottish Hockey's Paul Elliott for, not only facilitating this interview, but for being open to our involvement with the squad in Spain.

Tell us a little about Amy Brodie, the person.

I am from Edinburgh and went to Portobello High School, who were massively into Basketball, with not a hockey team in sight!

I work as a Physical Education teacher at George Heriot's School in Edinburgh, where I teach pupils as young as primary 1 up to senior 6. I also run the hockey curriculum.

I play for Edinburgh University club as a wild card but did go

to Edinburgh University for 4 years to get my degree. Prior to this I was with CALA Hockey club for eight years.



Scotland Squad Player

Why did you choose hockey as your sport?

I had no hockey at school so I actually got into it because my mum played. She played for Waverley-Inveresk-Trinity and I went along to try it out. They had a really good youth section and I predominantly played with boys and men from a young age. I also played in National League with them from a very young age (younger than you are meant to!) I loved playing up front and taking players on, I was a bit of a poacher!

Scottish International Player. What's that been like?

I have luckily had the opportunity to experience being a full time athlete. Playing hockey as your job is great as it is so much fun! Thankfully my employers have been really supportive and allowed me to do this. Representing Scotland is what I've always wanted to do and I am proud to have reached 50 caps. I'm now even more determined to continue to play at this level for many more caps!

It is of course tough as you have to give up a lot in terms of social life. Hockey takes priority, even over your job sometimes. Balancing your lifestyle is tough at times but to make selection you have to work hard. I have experienced set-backs such as not making Glasgow 2014 and then making London Europeans 2015 but getting injured 5 days before leaving. This is all just part of elite sport and it's how you come back that matters. I have been in the Scottish set up since I was 19 so it's now just a massive part of my life, I feel old in the hockey world!

And how do you think the recent WL2 in Valencia went for Scotland?

We didn't achieve our aim of coming 2nd and securing qualification for World League 3. This was a massive learning curve as one game cost us. We have a mix of experience and really young new players, some of whom had never experienced tournament hockey before. After the Ukraine game everyone was devastated.

When you break it down we failed to score any outfield goals and this is something we must work on going forward. On a positive note our penalty corner routines were effective and contributed massively to our 3rd place. Thankfully we still have a chance to qualify, but we are dependent on other results in the next World League 2 tournament in April.

Despite the numbers playing, hockey doesn't appear seen as 'mainstream' in Scotland, so sponsorship, both team and individual, must be important.

Considering Hockey is one of the top sports in the world for participation levels it is frustrating how little spotlight it gets, especially in Scotland. The girls' Great Britain team achieving gold has, thankfully, given immense media attention and hopefully encouraged more people to try hockey. We as a team perform best when we are full time athletes where we can recover properly. Trying to work full time and train full time is so hard and honestly exhausting.

To train full time we need funding. Sport Scotland, Scottish Hockey, and individual sponsorships have played a huge part in our achievements to date. Without them we could not be competing with the top teams in the world, who are all full time hockey players. We as a team also keep fund raising to add to sponsorship contributions, such as hockey camps ran by the athletes.

And finally, 'If I wasn't an International Hockey star...?'

I think I may have tried rugby or boxing or any sport which is physical. Or I would be teaching abroad!

In her interview above, Amy mentions funding and sponsorship. Back in 2013, Scotland's women were fully funded for 3 months, again from April to July in 2014 prior to the Commonwealth Games and, once more for another three months in 2015 leading up to that year's EuroHockey Nations Championships. Performances and results over this period of time showed that, given the funding and support, Scotland has the players and back-up to be more than capable of competing with several of the top teams in the World.



Addendum – Since interviewing Amy, Scotland's senior women's hockey team have qualified for the World League semi-final for the first time and will play in Belgium from 21 June to 2 July.

It has been a long wait for the team, who following their third place finish at World League 2 in Spain, have had to wait nearly two months for the final World League 2 in Canada, where their place was confirmed when India beat Belarus in the semi-final.