

Field hockey – Moodie has platform from which to build



Graham Moodie reflects on a superb performance from Scotland's under-21 squad in Russia, Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Graham Moodie accentuated the positives from Scotland's bronze medal in the EuroHockey Junior (under-21) Championship II in Russia.

His bravehearts were six minutes away from promotion to the top tier but that goal was snatched away by two late French goals.

France went on to win the event, beating Poland in the final in St Petersburg.

The Edinburgh-based coach said his men produced a professional performance to lift themselves and win the third place play-off with a 4-3 victory against Czech Republic.

The former Olympian was minus Grange player Luke Cranney for the semi-final clash with France and the third and fourth place game.

Cranney, who teaches at Loretto School in Musselburgh suffered a foot injury and was sidelined at a critical time.

The former Western Wildcats player had been influential in the games up to that point.

Captain Murray Collins (Loughborough University), who has been in the senior squad, showed his leadership qualities and was, said Moodie, really impressive in the tournament.

Aidan McQuade (Grove Menzieshill) and Rob Harwood (Western Wildcats) chipped in with key goals as did late call-up Kyle

Gladwin (Cannock) who replaced crooked Edinburgh-born striker Hamish Imrie.

Moodie will have six or seven of the players from the Russia trip available for the next European event in two years' time.

He said: "That gives us a real platform to build on but the boys were really impressive and had a great tournament."

Moodie said there were things to work on defensively but added: "The guys improved with every game and it was only in the game against Poland (which they lost 3-0) that they didn't execute.

"They played really well against Italy (winning 5-1) and Russia (winning 4-2) and their best performance was against France (the lost 3-2) but we just ran out of legs in the final quarter.

"They did so well to lift themselves for the third and fourth place game and were in total control in the third and fourth quarter to win 4-3 despite losing two late goals. That was a job well done."