

Gemma Fay announces her retirement from international football



Scotland captain and record caps holder Gemma Fay has announced her retirement from international football.

The former Hibernian Ladies goalkeeper amassed a record 203 caps during an illustrious international career spanning nearly 20 years, the pinnacle of which was leading the team to their first ever major international tournament finals at UEFA Women's Euros 2017.

At the finals this summer she played in all three matches as the team narrowly missed out on qualification for the quarter-finals in heart-breaking fashion on goal difference.

She won her first cap aged 16 in a 1-1 draw with the Czech Republic in Inverness in 1998. Her second cap resulted in her first clean sheet, as the team beat Lithuania 17-0 at Scotstoun, in a match that to this day still marks the SWNT's record victory.

Her milestone 100th cap came at the Cyprus Cup in 2009, the same year she became team captain, while she earned her unprecedented 200th cap in a 1-0 friendly victory over the Republic of Ireland in June this year.

"I felt the time was right to call it a day and that my journey was complete after playing in the Euros this summer," said Gemma.

"I have given everything I can for my country and as the team moves into a new era with a new head coach it's time to pass the baton to the next generation.

“Captaining my country for the best part of a decade has meant everything to me. It’s an indescribable honour that is asked of very few people and to be part of that has been humbling.

“When I was a child if you had told me I would play for my country once I would have been delighted, so to have done so on 203 occasions is incredible.

“It is hard to describe how much it has meant to me to play for my country. It has helped shape me into the person I have wanted to be.

“Finally, I want to say thank you to all the coaches I have worked with, including Jim Fleeting, who gave me my first cap, Vera Pauw, and of course, Anna Signeul, who I played under for 12 years.

“This is such an exciting time for women’s football in Scotland and I wish Shelley and her team every success in the future. I look forward to watching this team flourish.”

New Scotland Women’s National Team head coach Shelley Kerr, who played alongside Gemma during her own international career, paid tribute to Gemma’s mental fortitude.

“Gemma is a true role model for any athlete. The years of dedication and commitment she has given to her country are an inspiration and one cannot underestimate her contribution to women’s football in Scotland over the past two decades.

“There is no doubt that as a team we will miss her qualities – not just her football talent, but her communication skills and her leadership.

“Her being an ever-present in the squad for nearly 20 years is remarkable. She is a very intelligent footballer who understands the requirements at the highest level.

“Gemma is a fantastic role model and a true ambassador of the game and I am pleased that she ends her international career

in fitting style with a victory over Spain at the Euros.”