

# Shelley Kerr takes charge of Scotland Women for first time tomorrow in Budapest



Shelley Kerr played the first of 60 games for Scotland in a 3-0 defeat to England in April 1989 as a 19-year-old.

Successful coaching spells with Arsenal Ladies, Scotland Under-19s and Stirling University followed but tomorrow she will see her ultimate dream become a reality.

At 4pm (UK time) on Thursday Scotland will take on Hungary in Budapest and it's a moment she eagerly awaits as her journey as Scotland head coach begins.

Along with her assistant Andy Thomson, she met with the squad for the first time on Monday, leading an intense session before the team jetted off to Budapest in the afternoon.

The match will aid preparations for the World Cup qualifiers which kicks off next month against Belarus in a group also containing Albania, Switzerland and Poland.

Reflecting on her first couple of days with the team, she said: "The players have got off to a great start and have been really receptive of our ideas. I've spoken to them about what our philosophy will be as a team moving forward.

"I have played alongside or coached the majority of the squad and it's been good to get familiar with them again.

"I've developed as a person personally and professionally since then and you can see all the players have done similar in their performance journey so far.

“We are preparing for the Hungary match of course, but ultimately the World Cup Qualifiers are our focus.

“In our first team meeting we outlined how we will work moving forward and it’s a long term strategy. You have to look beyond the here and now.”

Shelley’s journey to the top hasn’t always been straightforward but after experiencing a number of different lines of work, she is now ready to continue Scotland’s rise, after they made their first appearance at a major championships in the summer.

“I’m a great believer that you should have a broad skillset and you shouldn’t be afraid to make mistakes along the way,” she said.

“Your lifelong journey is a learning experience and being subjected to lots of different experiences will only help that.

“I worked in a factory for 17 years, eventually ending up in football management and I’ve since gone back to university.

“I worked in the factory when I was a teenager. It was a Japanese company who were really big on values and they taught me two words which have stood me in great stead throughout my career.

“Being organised and disciplined. If you can be that you’ll do well in life.”

A lot has changed since Shelley first pulled on a Scotland shirt, including her mind-set going into the games.

Having prepared the team in Budapest, Shelley is relaxed about her first match and looking forward to the immense feeling of pride of taking charge of the team.

“As a player I got really nervous before games but I don’t

really get like that as a coach. After the pre-match meal, it's always a hard time as you know you've done your preparation and it's upto the players to perform.

"It's going to be a very proud moment come kick-off."