

First Minister presents international caps to Scots' women ahead of World Cup qualifier



Scotland Women face Albania tonight at the Paisley 2012 Stadium, kick-off 7.30pm with free entry for all supporters in the first home World Cup qualifier of the new campaign.

Ahead of the fixture manager Shelley Kerr and the squad attended St. Andrew's House where the players received their caps from the 2-1 win over Belarus from First Minister Nicola Sturgeon who is the patron for the national side.

The First Minister took up her ambassadorial role in March 2016. Through her position, she has promoted and championed the women's national team, working with football authorities to encourage the ever-increasing participation in the women's game, whilst continuing to grow attendances.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "I was delighted to host the reception for Shelley and the women's national team to recognise their success.

"Following the courageous but heart-breaking performance at the European Championships in the summer – their first ever appearance at the a major international tournament – I wanted to wish them well for the World Cup qualifiers.

"We've started this campaign strongly and I am sure Shelley and the rest of the staff can lead this talented team to France. They are inspiring role models and I am incredibly

proud to be the patron.

“Interest in the women’s game has never been higher, and I am determined the Scottish Government supports that.

“We want women and girls of all ages to be inspired to kick a ball and for men and women to attend games.

“I hope the whole of Scotland roars the team on to victory against Albania, and in the remaining fixtures.”

Shelley Kerr said: “It is an incredible honour to have the First Minister as our Patron and have the support of such an inspirational and influential leader.

“After enjoying a productive week with the squad it was a boost for the squad to visit St. Andrew’s House, meeting the First Minister and have her present the players’ caps from the Belarus match.

“We’ve come off the back of a really good away win over Belarus and we now need to build on that.

“Albania will be a team that will set up to defend and will make it very difficult for us.

“We need to be patient in our build up play and they will be play on the counter attack.

“They are a developing nation but have recently climbed two ranking places so we know they’ve got a couple of quick players who could cause us problems.

“We need to concentrate on what we have and it’ll be important to be patient during the match and take our chances when they come as we have a talented group.

“I was really pleased with the performance the other night and we showed just how much of an expansive attacking team we were.”

Jenny Beattie: "After missing out on the Euros, this is the most excited I've been about meeting up with the squad since my first call-up.

"Not going to the Euros was really disappointing but in a new era under Shelley Kerr it's safe to say I'm really excited to be back involved.

"Coping not being in the Netherlands was about changing my mind-set and being focused on coming back as strong as possible.

"All the changes that Shelley has made have all been really positive. There is a really good vibe around the squad and we have won all our games so far which is always good too.

"I've got a few friends and family coming to the game which will be nice as I've not played a home game in more than a year.

"Hopefully it 'll be a good crowd and we can top it off with three points."