

# Ice hockey – basement rivals clash



Action from Murrayfield courtesy of Ian Coyle

Edinburgh Capitals and Dundee Stars clash head-on on Friday (face-off 7.30pm) in a huge basement battle at The Dundee Ice Arena.

They are desperately in need of points as they bid to catch the chasing pack.

Capitals prop up the 12-strong table with six points from 22 games while their Tayside rivals have 15 points from 23 games.

Both go into the game on a downer. Capitals have lost their last four games.

Dundee snapped a seven-game losing streak with a home win over Manchester Storm on Sunday, but crashed 7-2 to Sheffield Steelers in the Challenge Cup, quarter-final, first-leg at The Dundee Ice Arena on Wednesday.

Omar Pacha, Stars' coach, was lifted by Sunday's 5-3 victory over Storm, his previous club.

But the mid-week defeat, with a return due in Yorkshire on Tuesday, was a set-back.

Pacha's men, however, eye two points to cut the gap between them and tenth-placed Braehead Clan.

Currently, the misfiring Glasgow side have 22 points from the same number of games.

And Dundee's Canadian-born playcaller said: "Sunday was a huge

win for us and we have to build on that.

“Wednesday was a real challenge for us against a quality team.”

Capitals are hurting on and off the ice and bosses have promised success-hungry fans that they will strengthen.

New player signings are expected next week and management say a commercial manager will be appointed.

Ukraine-born coach Dmitri Khristich will, however, have to take the ice in Dundee without new blood.

Elsewhere, Braehead Clan captain Ville Hämäläinen demanded that his men produce their top performance when they entertain league newcomers Guildford Flames on Saturday (face-off 7pm).

And he believes victory against the English side can be a springboard to moving up the table.

Hamalainen said: “When you look at the league table we are only five points away from fifth place.

“To start climbing back up the ladder we need two points starting with Guildford.

“Guildford are a good hockey team and have been in form recently so we need to ensure we bring our A game (to the rink) and play for the full 60 minutes.”