

Hibs win SPFL Development League title with victory over Aberdeen



The Hibernian Development Squad wrapped up the SPFL Development League title with a 2-0 win over Aberdeen at the Oriam yesterday.

That result, coupled with Dundee's 4-2 defeat at the hands of Hearts saw the youngsters' lead at the top of the table become unassailable.

The team kick-started the league campaign with a comprehensive 6-1 win at Rugby Park against Kilmarnock, before going on to take four points from six off Celtic.

After the final whistle, Assistant Coach Grant Murray who also takes the under-20s side told Hibernian Media: "It's great for the boys that their hard work has been rewarded. When you start a season, you start afresh, you want to win games of football, you want the players to develop and you want to get them into the first-team if possible.

"The longer you sit at the top of the table, which we had last season but lost out quite late, we had that anticipation and feeling come back towards the end of the season and it was up

to them to go out and perform well, manage games of football and win games – they've certainly done that.

"This season, they really deserve it considering the team that they have sat at the top of the league. They deserve a massive congratulations.

"I certainly have seen the players developing this season. Winning and developing goes hand-in-hand.

"Don't get me wrong, the league is about developing players and getting them towards the first-team, but players develop when you're winning games of football.

"In my eyes, our players are developing at a good rate and have shown that they are capable of going on and winning the Development League.

"A lot of the performances have been fantastic, none more so than the first game of the season down at Rugby Park. To go and win any game by that big a margin is great and Kilmarnock had quite an experienced side out that night too.

"The players have pushed on from there. Yes, there's been other games where they have let themselves down, but the performances have been excellent, especially in the last quarter of the season when they really mattered.

"The two performances against Celtic, winning at home with the last kick of the ball and going ahead at Cappielow with ten men and almost winning the game. These are the big games where the players want to test themselves.

"The game that gave them the biggest lift was the recent win against Falkirk where they went behind and they had to really dig in and go right to the end and won it comfortably in the end.

"The players have scored in every game this season in the league, so that's a great credit to them as well."

Next week, the side have an opportunity to complete a double – the first Hibernian Academy side to do so in nine years – against Aberdeen at Hampden Park in the SFA Youth Cup Final on Thursday 26 April (7:30pm kick-off).

He added: “It is hopefully part one of a potential double and I’m sure the players are relishing that.

“The result against Aberdeen on Tuesday won’t have any influence whatsoever on the game, but, psychologically I’m hoping that it does give the boys a wee edge knowing that they are capable of beating Aberdeen.

“It will be a close game and a tough game and we know Aberdeen are capable of beating us as they won the first league game, so they will be confident of beating us in the cup final as well.”