

Ryan Porteous misses sister's graduation in USA to prepare for Toulon Tournament



Hibs' defender Ryan Porteous will miss his sister Emma's graduation in America after being called up to the Scotland under-21 squad for this summer's Toulon Tournament.

The highly rated teenager is desperate to represent his country in the tournament which is entering into its 48th edition when it all kicks off on Saturday 26 May.

Scotland have been handed a tough group. France's squad contains players with experience playing for the likes of Ligue 1 clubs Nice, Angers and Montpellier, whilst the other teams include players from the likes of Dinamo Zagreb, Valencia's B team and K-League giants FC Seoul.

Scotland's campaign begins against the west African nation at Stade de Lattre-de-Tassigny, Aubagne on Sunday, following the match against France and South Korea.

Porteous told the club website: "I was booked to go away on a couple of holidays with my family, but as soon as I knew I was in the squad they were cancelled straight away.

"My sister Emma is actually graduating with a degree in Criminal Justice from Seton Hill University in Pittsburgh while I am away. I would have liked to have gone, but my family understand why I'm not able to go – they'll all have a good time over in the States I'm sure.

"All I can do now is to be focused on the games. I was the proudest brother on the planet when I seen the pictures of her with the diploma. Hopefully I can make my family proud if I

get on the pitch in France.

"I am looking forward to getting started into the tournament. Ever since I found out I was in the squad it's been something I've always had on my mind.

"I have spoken to a few players that have been to the tournament before and they have all said that it is a great one to be involved in – just looking at some of the teams and players involved this year just proves that.

"I can't wait to get out to France and get started, I'm looking forward to it massively."

The call-up is his first into the under-21 set-up, but he has been involved with Scotland at under-19 level – winning seven caps and captaining the side.

"Playing for the under-19s and captaining them has been an honour for me and I'm glad that I've been called into the under-21s.

"The step up in quality will be quite a big one, but the under-19s has prepared me well for it.

"We will be up against some quality players that play at big clubs around the world, but we have some great players too.

"Guys that are in our squad, like Oliver Burke, will definitely help bring me, and some of the other guys in the team, on given his experience in Germany, England and with the national side at senior level."

"I like to think that we have a good chance of qualifying out of the group, despite being in a tough section.

"It is a bit cliché, but there really are no easy games. Togo and South Korea both have their qualities and the French are the favourites to win the group we are in given their strength.

“We will just be working as hard as we can to try and get positive results and hopefully getting a bit of momentum under our belts.”