

Tickets going fast for Hibs' legends charity match at Ainslie Park on Saturday



Fourteen Hibs' 'legends' have now signed up for Saturday's charity match at Ainslie Park and over 1,400 tickets have been sold so far.

The game is to raise awareness of Garry O'Connor's Second

Chance Football Academy with proceeds going to several worthwhile local charities.

Garry enjoyed a fantastic football career, starting off at Hibs where he became one of the youngest players ever to be capped by Scotland at the age of 18. His 42-goal partnership with lifelong pal Derek Riordan helped Hibs to a 3rd place finish and qualification for Europe and his last minute goal in 10-man victory over Hearts at Easter Road will never be forgotten.

A big money move to Russia followed and Garry generously donated his signing on fee to the club which was used to help fund the training centre at East Mains.

Garry scored the winning goal for Lokomotiv Moscow in the final of the 2007 Russian Cup final before returning to the UK with Birmingham City where he helped the club to promotion back to the Premiership. His goal against Wolverhampton Wanderers was voted the club's 'Moment of the Season.'

A return to Easter Road followed and his goals helped Hibs reach the Scottish Cup final in 2012.



Now Garry is determined to use his considerable experience to help youngsters who have been released by professional clubs to get back into the beautiful game through his Academy.

Garry told the Edinburgh Reporter: " I'm really looking forward to Saturday and I would like to thank Alison from Tamsons Bar for her hard work in arranging this game.

"Pat (Stanton) and Jimmy (O'Rourke) will be picking the teams and each side will have six legends plus guys who have paid to play alongside them.

“In the past few days we have sourced many more raffle prizes including signed jerseys and other Hibs’ memorabilia.

“The proceeds will be split between a number of charities including the Pat Stanton Foundation, a riding school for the disabled, Spartans Connections and in particular to help young coach Matthew Moir who needs a new RGK wheelchair as well as the Hibs’ Foundation.

“The event is also about raising awareness of my Second Chance Football Academy. We are looking to help youngsters who have been freed by clubs get back into the game. This is a concept I am very passionate about as there is so much talent being lost.

“Many players are late developers and just need their confidence boosted and an arm around their shoulders which they don’t always get at professional clubs.

“The courses will be open to youngsters from anywhere and we are looking at the Indian and Chinese markets. Accommodation has been arranged and the players will have the chance to impress scouts, managers and coaches.

“Glen Hoddle and Jamie Vardie run similar camps in England but there is nothing like this operating in Scotland.

“Finding suitable venues is difficult but we have Recreational Park in North Berwick and I am in negotiation with Peffermill in Edinburgh.

“My aim is to make it a community based Academy and I am in talks with West Lothian and Edinburgh Council with a view to providing help to youngsters who can’t afford to pay for the courses.

“I am also looking to start summer camps for younger kids in the Edinburgh and North Berwick areas which will include football coaching and fun activities.

"We are currently updating our website but at present I can be contacted through Facebook.

"I am really excited about this project and more details will be available once the website is finished.

"Saturday will be a great day and my phone hasn't stopped ringing with people looking for tickets although fans can pay at the gate."

Kick off is at 3pm with entry available from 2pm. Adult tickets cost £10 with children and OAPs £5.

Those taking part include Jimmy Boco, Alan Orman, Mickey Weir, Derek Riordan, Ian Murray, Kevin Harper, Ivan Sproule, Tam McManus and Jamie McLuskey,