

Field hockey – Euro hopes for Grange coach Knipe



Fired-up coach David Knipe has urged his men to up their game for Europe. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Grange open their Euro Hockey League campaign on Friday in Barcelona when they square-up to Austrian champions SV Arminen.

Then they face the might of Dutch cracks HC Oranje-Rood on Saturday at the Pau Negre Stadium.

Coach David Knipe does not under-estimate the challenge of reaching the K016 next Spring, but says the squad are relishing the experience of playing in the Euro Hockey League.

And Grange go into the Euro challenge on the back of a confidence-boosting home victory over much-improved Western Wildcats at Fettes College on Saturday.

The Edinburgh side trailed Auchenhowie-based Western 2-0 but battled back to score through Scottish international Duncan Riddell in the final minute.

Grange skipper Cammy Fraser was red carded but club officials confirm that will not affect the influential player from appearing in this the top European club tournament.

SV Arminen have won the Austrian title more times than any other club and return to Barcelona where they beat Scottish side Kelburne and drew with Athletic Terrassa to top their group in Round One four years ago.

That result confirmed them as the first Austrian side to reach the Knockout 16 in 2015, but Arminen were beaten by eventual champions Oranje-Zwart.

Netherlands-based Oranje-Swart then changed their name to HC Oranje-Rood and they qualified third in the highly-competitive Dutch league.

They have a glittering history in the competition, winning it as Oranje-Zwart in 2015 and claiming the runners-up spot in 2014 and 2017.

Former internationalist Knipe, an ex-Grove Menzieshill player, said: "Arminen are a very good side. They are filled with Austrian internationalists so are very experienced. It will be a really tough battle.

"Everyone knows how good Oranje-Rood are, so this is a fantastic chance for the players to compete against the best and see what it looks like."