

Hibs will not be participating in the SPFL Reserve League next season



Hibs will not be participating in the SPFL Reserve League next season, in its current format.

The club will now organise their own games programme that will ensure the squad are pushed out of any comfort zone, with opposition drawn from Scotland, England and further afield when possible.

Head of Football Operations George Craig explained: "This was not a decision we took lightly as a club and we are committed to playing our part in ensuring that youth development in Scotland is in the best possible condition it can be.

"However, first and foremost, our responsibility is to Hibernian and our supporters.

"We are passionate about the work done within the Hibernian Academy and are proud of our record in producing talented young professionals who have gone on to make a real impact in the Scottish game.

"If we wish to constantly improve standards across the board then it stands to reason that we have to constantly re-evaluate what we do, and there are some concerns about the

Reserve League setup as it is.

“In recent weeks our Development Squad have been exposed to a different kind of test against Stirling Albion’s senior side and Under-23 teams from Huddersfield Town and Middlesbrough.

“Our Head Coach, Paul Heckingbottom, and his assistant, Robbie Stockdale, are from developmental backgrounds in England and they will both attest to the fact they learned more about those involved in those games on those three occasions than in some of the Reserve League fixtures.

“We want to keep providing our young players with games that will ask different questions of them and accelerate and enhance their development. That desire is what has led us to, regrettably, take a step away from the Reserve League for next season.

“Strategic loan moves will continue to play a big part in our development strategy and we have benefited from such arrangements in the recent past with Jamie Gullan at Raith Rovers and Josh Campbell at Airdrie.

“Ryan Porteous, of course, also had a very successful loan spell with Edinburgh City before breaking into our first team.

“Details of all our Development players have been circulated around Championship, League One and League Two clubs.

“The best-case scenario for us would be to see a number of the boys go out on loan to senior clubs, playing senior football at the weekends while also being able to take part in our midweek games programme against specifically-sourced opposition.

“Nothing is ever set in stone. We will continue to fine-tune and re-evaluate what we do but the goal remains the same.”