

Hockey – Allan back to his roots and aiming high with CALA

Neil Allan has gone back to his roots having played for and coached the men at CALA Edinburgh during a period of success in men's Division One.

He has targeted a rise to the top flight of Scottish domestic hockey for the club.

Currently, the women's team are seventh in Division One and have been out of Scotland's elite for three seasons.

The men's side has been struggling to get back into the highest level for nine years.

Allan, who coached men's Premiership side, Grove Menzieshill, for the past two seasons, taking them into Europe, runs the Complete Hockey Coaching organisation.

And his ambitious plans include the development of a five-year programme at CALA which includes linking with local schools to find new talent.

Allan, whose wife Sarah has been a member of the club for 20 years, said: "We are developing a pathway through the club from the bottom to top. For me, it's going back to a club which I played for.

"Everybody here wants to reach the highest possible level and we are re-structuring to do that."

There is raw, young talent at the club and Allan said: "Our oldest player in the women's team is 20 and the youngest 14. Several players are still at school and there is a lot of potential in this squad.

“They are seventh in the second tier having won three and drawn five of their 11 games so far this season but we want to be way better than that.”

It will, he acknowledged, take time but he said: “There is real enthusiasm to get it right.”