

Former Hibs' star Lucy Graham to captain Everton in FA Cup semi-final tonight

Former Hibs' player Lucy Graham will lead her Everton side out in an FA Cup semi-final against Birmingham City, live on BBC Four, kick-off 7.15pm.

As well as captaining Everton who are managed by former Hibs' boss Willie Kirk, the 23-year-old is hoping to cement a regular spot in the national team, having amassed six caps and impressing earlier this year in three victories in Spain at the Pinatar Cup.



Lucy took part in Hibs' memorable Champions' League match against Bayern Munich

During UEFA Grassroots Week she reflected on her time growing up playing football and her first experiences of kicking a ball.

She told the SFA website: "I started playing in the streets with friends when I was about seven years old and I was always active as a kid, whatever the weather. I grew up in a typical council estate environment in a small town in Fife called Ballingry, which I really enjoyed.

"In estates like mine you just have blocks of houses and they were filled with kids my age. It was back in the day when kids always played outside and we would constantly be in the streets kicking the ball about.

"I lived opposite a community centre which is knocked down now and that makes me sad. There was always something going on there, and then close to that there was a horrendous AstroTurf where I learned to play football. It wasn't like the good 4G

stuff you get now. This was a padded, sandy surface that would tear your skin off if you fell on it. That's been demolished as well.

"My house also backed onto a field where amateur football would be played so I naturally gravitated towards loving the game, to the point where I played it every day. I would walk to school kicking the ball, play football at break time and then when school finished I would rush home to play it again. I've been obsessed ever since I first kicked a ball.

"I started at Cowdenbeath Central Boys Club when I was about eight and I was there for five years. As a girl I felt I had to earn respect right away. I would turn up and I could hear them saying 'I'm not wanting a girl on my team', I'm not passing to her'. Once I skipped by them a few times and knocked them over they soon realised I played just like them.

I'm proud of how far I've come and how far I can still go but it's not just me that's put in the hard work, there are so many other people who've propelled me to where I am now. I wouldn't have gone anywhere without my support network.

In October Scotland are back in action against Albania and Finland and Graham is eager to be involved: She continued: "Playing for my country is the pinnacle for me. Breaking into the national team has evaded me for a few years but more recently I've become involved and I'm really happy about that.

"I just want to stay involved and give me best. I have so much to give and I want to help us get to the Euros. When the September camp was cancelled I was really disappointed as I was desperate to get back into camp. For it to be delayed that little bit longer, we're keen to hit the ground running. It'll be a busy schedule but I prefer that."