

Scott Gemmill expecting tough test in Gorgie against Czech Republic

Scotland Under-21s face Czech Republic at Tynecastle on Friday night in a crucial fixture in the youngsters bid for European qualification.

Following last month's 1-0 victory in Lithuania, the Under-21s face a home fixture against Czech Republic before travelling to San Marino in Group 4.



Head coach Scot Gemmill named his squad two weeks ago and has since seen some changes to his group.

Hibs defender Ryan Porteous and Aberdeen player Robby McCrorie have been called up to Steve Clarke's side ahead of the EURO 2020 Play-Off semi-final clash against Israel.

Gemmill is expecting a tough test in Gorgie after watching a closely fought encounter in the previous meeting between the two sides.

The Under-21s head coach has full confidence in his players to put in a strong display in what is a crucial match in the bid for qualification.

He said: "I think it will be an intense and physical game on Friday. Over in the Czech Republic the game was very fast and they have difficult players that we have to make sure to try and contain, but that is the interesting bit for me, to see if our players can execute the game plan.

"I have a lot of trust in them to do that because they have shown consistently that they are willing to do that hard work and that they are conscious of what they need to do."

The young Scots have conceded just two goals so far in qualification, which has formed the joint-best defence in the group alongside the table-topping Czech's and Gemmill believes that is a crucial element of success at any level of the game.

He continued: "I think it's so important for the team to have that solidity and be hard to play against because if you want to be successful you have to be hard to beat," the head coach said. "If you want to qualify at any level, that solidity and that nature of being hard to play against and conceding very few goals can be crucial, but it takes a lot of work to achieve that."

Amid all of the challenges presented by COVID-19, Gemmill admits that while he is fully prepared for the match on Friday, he places huge importance on all of the work taking place around him.

He said: "There's a game plan off the pitch as well as on it and I'm confident in all the staff involved with the Under-21s to keep doing such a good job during difficult circumstances to protect the health and wellbeing of our players. We went to Lithuania just over three weeks ago and all the staff executed the off-pitch game plan perfectly."

Scotland could go just one point behind Czech Republic at the top of Group 4 with a victory on Friday.

Fans can watch all the action from Edinburgh on the Scotland National Team YouTube Channel.