

Hibs announce 'strategic partnership' with Stenhousemuir

Hibs have announced a strategic partnership with Stenhousemuir.

Sporting Director Graeme Mathie explained: "We are really pleased to have secured this strategic partnership with Stenhousemuir. The notion of having strategic partnerships was suggested in the summer as part of discussions on how to improve Scottish football and it was something we were really keen to explore.



"In all the discussions I have had with everyone at Stenhousemuir, I have been really impressed at their clarity of vision – not only how the partnership can benefit them on-field in the short-term, but also how they can assist us to develop the level of the young players coming through our Academy and Development Squad.

" I am in regular dialogue with Jamie Swinney and David Reid at Stenhousemuir and with Davie Irons and Kevin McGoldrick, who have been very supportive in bringing the partnership to

life and I am looking forward to working with them all going forward.

“We have previously shown our older Academy players a document we’ve called a ‘Yellow Brick Road’ when they come to sign a professional contract, which plots the paths their careers could take between the ages of 16 and 23, when we hope they will eventually progress beyond Hibernian to a move that can change their life. Each player’s journey will be different, but now we can start to highlight some options to help them along that road.

“For example, Gary Jardine has been excellent for us at both Edinburgh City and now Civil Service Strollers. Two of the players now on loan at Stenhousemuir this season worked with Gary last year at Civil, and this year we were able to give Connor Young (16) and Jack Brydon (17) an early experience of playing against men at a very competitive level, and in a supporting environment with Gary which we know will be beneficial for them moving forward.

“It would be an obvious progression for Connor and Jack to move to the SPFL with Stenhousemuir in the not-too-distant future. We can now show all our young players that there is a defined pathway here for them at Hibernian, involving a club in the football league who want to work with us to help them develop from a young age.

“We currently have three young players on loan to Stenhousemuir, and all are at different stages in their development. Callum Yeats has played regularly at left-back, having been on loan at Civil Service Strollers in the Lowland League last year and has adapted very well to the challenges of league football. Jayden Fairley is a midfield player who has only recently turned 17 years old and is currently experiencing challenges at Stenhousemuir that we couldn’t give him by playing regular Academy football, which will undoubtedly be positive for his long-term development. Paddy

Martin is experiencing playing in the football league for the first time after their goalkeeper, Graeme Smith, was injured last month.

“The experiences for all these players are different, but the one thing which is consistent is they are all benefitting from a very good environment at the club. Davie Irons and Kevin McGoldrick have been excellent with the players, and they have a strong core of experienced players who are also setting a very good example and have helped the players settle into their group.

“The partnership means we will have regular meetings between staff from both clubs, not only to discuss the development of the players who are here now, but to start to plan what player(s) may be next to benefit from the experience. Having played a friendly match against their squad players a number of weeks ago, their staff are now starting to get to know younger players in our system and the plan would be to give Stenhousemuir staff the opportunity to work with selected players in the months prior to any particular loan period so they know exactly what they are bringing into their club, and can be comfortable working with us to develop their strengths and weaknesses within the challenges of league football.

“After the announcement last month of the relationship with Charleston Battery, it is great that we can expand our formal player pathway and start to utilise these relationships to give our players different experiences which will only seek to help them progress and accelerate their development.

“I have nothing but positive things to say about all those involved in this Partnership from Stenhousemuir and look forward to progressing the relationship in the months and years ahead.”

Stenhousemuir FC CEO Jamie Swinney added: “Stenhousemuir FC is delighted to have established a formal working relationship

with Hibernian FC. The strategic partnership provides a unique and exciting opportunity for both clubs and the emerging young players within the Hibernian FC pathway. By working in collaboration, the partnership will provide a framework which harnesses the resources and expertise within both clubs while maximising playing opportunities for some of the most exciting young players in Scotland.

“The unique partnership will establish a strategic framework which will create opportunities for players to go on loan from Hibs to the Warriors with both clubs responsible for the development of the players. The relationship will see the sides play in-house development games, hold regular player progression meetings and share coaching, sports science, sports psychology and video analysis resources.

“The strategic partnership with Hibernian FC is a key aspect of the club’s Performance Strategy. The concept of strategic partnerships was initially discussed at the club over two years ago and the club has been a long-term advocate of increasing the number of loan players permitted by the SPFL, a decision that the SPFL board made earlier this year. The maximum number of players one club can take on loan from another was previously set at two, however this was increased to four in the summer which enabled the club to formalise a relationship with Hibernian.

“By developing this formal relationship, Stenhousemuir FC will have the opportunity to identify emerging talent from the Hibernian Academy and to work closely with them to aid their transition into professional football and to provide the club with talented young players for the first team season on season.

“Stenhousemuir FC is committed to providing a challenging and engaging environment which will support the learning and development of the players involved. The club is pleased to be a partner of Hibernian FC and looks forward to a developing a

strong, progressive relationship with Graeme and his team.”

Stenhousemuir FC manager Davie Irons added: “We are delighted to be involved in a partnership agreement with Hibs, which will ultimately have long-term benefits for both clubs. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate everyone involved for agreeing a strategy to compliment the vision of developing the young talent and providing a platform to flourish as young footballers.”