

# Cochrane looking forward to home match with fans

When Hearts announced the loan signing of Alex Cochrane from Brighton, fans immediately began some research on the 21-year-old, who until then was a bit of an unknown quantity.

Hearts Sporting Director Joe Savage described the signing as a “coup” and revealed that Hearts “saw off competition for his signature”, so maybe there’s more to the left sided defender than your average Hearts loan signing.

Cochrane was born in Brighton coming through the Seagulls youth academy, where he recalls playing at youth level both with and against some of England’s brightest young talents.

He said: “I trained and played with Foden and Sancho, but I’ve played against Reece James and Bukayo Saka as well. These guys were top class then and you could see that back then, they’re going to be top top players in the future 100%, they’re a different level.

“Reece James is the one I’ve grown up with and come up against the most, I remember one time, he gave me a torrid time in centre midfield, just running me about and even then, I knew he was going to be a very good player.”

Cochrane spent last season on loan at Union Saint-Gilloise, but he sustained an ankle injury early in his loan spell and has undergone rehabilitation to bring his fitness levels back

on track before joining Hearts.

He said: "I'm feeling good, feeling settled. Speed-wise I feel I'm getting there. Pre-season is always a tough one, especially here, the cup starts so quickly so you have to be ready to go, I feel I'm there though and I'm ready."

Hearts have already played their first competitive fixture of the season-winning 2-0 at Balmoor on Saturday, while Cochrane's Brighton teammates will be enjoying some time off, but he says he has no issues with Scotland's early resumption.

He said: "In a way yeah, I do prefer it. It means you can get up to match speed straight away, the quicker you're there, the more confident you'll be with the ball and you'll have the simple techniques back. It's definitely a positive getting started so early."

2,000 fans will walk through the turnstiles at Tynecastle on Tuesday night as Cove Rangers [roll into Gorgie](#) and Cochrane is looking forward to sampling the well-known Tynecastle atmosphere.

He said: "I've heard the atmosphere is something special, so I'm looking forward to getting the fans in, even if it is just a couple of thousand, I can't wait to get them back, because it's been far too long now."

Cochrane received plenty of comment from his teammates following England's Euro 2020 defeat to Italy on Sunday but has a positive outlook on the future and insists the players should hold their heads high.

He said: "It was a weird one. The lads gave the English guys some stick. There was quite a bit of celebrating around my flat last night because England lost, there were people on the balconies shouting and screaming "Come on Italy".

"I watched the game in my apartment, mixed emotions, a quality

start, but it wasn't to be in the end, the lads were top class, and they did a lot better than I thought they'd do, unfortunate result, but they did the nation proud. There's plenty more talent coming through too, so it's a very exciting time for English football."

Cochrane sympathises with Marcus Rashford, Bukayo Saka and Jaidon Sancho, who all missed penalties in the shootout defeat, having missed one himself in an important Youth Cup tie for Brighton against Stoke City.

He said: "I've missed a penalty at a crucial time before, I remember I was in tears then, but I bet its ten times harder what these guys had to go through last night.

"Saka is 19, Sancho, 21 and Rashford 23, it just shows how much courage and belief they have in themselves to go and slot it away, unfortunately it wasn't to be for them, but they'll bounce back and go again, because they're top players."

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