

Hearts Women are ready for the new season

In December 2018, Hearts agreed to an annual six-figure investment in their women's team, as they began a work-in-progress to build a side that could eventually compete with their successful rivals across the city, Hibernian Ladies.

After the departure of former boss, Andy Kirk, Hearts have now appointed the "standout candidate" Eva Olid.

The Spaniard most recently spent 14 months as the head coach at the Catalan Football Association and prior to that, spent time coaching Houston Dynamo's women's side.

Hearts kick off their 2021/22 SWPL campaign against Hamilton Accies on Sunday and the new boss can't wait to get started.

"I'm so happy to be here," Eva said.

"I arrived two weeks ago and the first week has been about trying to organise everything but this week I am able to focus more on football things."

Olid has previous experience of the SWPL having previously come over prior to the Covid-19 pandemic to learn about the Scottish game.

"I knew this league because Celtic have a Spanish coach and I came here to see how the football works here. The methodology

of Celtic and the teams who play football here and the Scottish league. That was two years ago, and I continued to follow but then last year because of COVID, they didn't play much."

Having coached in both Spain and the U.S., Olid believes the different styles of play in both countries will benefit her in Scotland.

"When I knew that hearts needed a coach, I saw this as a good challenge for me. I like to coach abroad and have a challenge away from my own country.

"I was working in the United States because by going abroad is a way I can improve so much as a coach. It lets me live new experiences and I think I can help with my philosophy and the style of play and to bring that together with the philosophy and styles of other countries. "We can use the philosophy I have from Spain and together I think we can get a good performance from the team.

"I like the challenge. In America the football is so physical and when I arrived there they found it strange that my style of play was all with the ball. They wanted it to be more physical, more analytical and athletic. They wanted to run, run, run, run. But I don't want to just run, run, run. I see that as old, maybe what was happening 20 years ago.

"Now football is more about possession and what you do with the ball, it is more technical and about all these things. I think that here I can work as I would want more than I could in the United States."

Having grown up watching Spanish football, which she believes is now improving, Olid states the importance of doing something with the ball, if you adopt a possession-based style.

"In Spain we have the philosophy of Barcelona, which is the

possession game.

“The good thing is to combine this possession game with a vertical game, because Barcelona plays so much side-to-side and it’s a slow game, so keep the possession but also the players need to decide when to play vertical, because the main goal in a match is to score.

“The first tier in Spain, and it is improving so much, the level of the teams, now they are professional, I try to watch all the games that I can, both here and in Spain.”

There is a changing dynamic in women’s football in Scotland just now, Glasgow City’s dominance is under threat after investment from Rangers and Celtic, and Olid believes this is happening in the women’s game across many leagues but believes Hearts will succeed if they work hard enough.

“I think this is happening in many leagues. There are always some clubs that have more money, they have professionals that others don’t have and that is a big difference when you go to compete in a match.

“We have to work with our resources, so when we play the match, this big difference doesn’t exist, so that means we need to work hard.

“When you don’t have all the resources that you want, you need to work hard, motivate the players and just work, work and work. That is the only way.”

Hearts are very much the ‘new kids on the block’ in Edinburgh with Spartans and Hibernian having had very successful women’s sides for many years.

There is no guarantee Olid will make an instant impact, but with a very young side at her disposal and a possession-based style of play, Hearts Women should be an exciting side to watch out for this season and beyond.

"We are a young team. Our goal is to blood this young talent and improve the performance of the team. We will work to compete every week, we want to get the three points every week, for that we train.

"Our intention is to finish in the highest position we can, but we will work to get the points every week."