

Imrie back to provide inspiration

Hamish Imrie gambled when he left Scotland to develop his hockey skills in The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium but the Scottish international is back in Scotland's Capital and guiding Edinburgh University as their player coach.

His talent shone through as the ambitious students thrashed men's Premiership rivals Inverleith 5-0 at Mary Erskine. Indeed, a senior Inverleith club member sportingly admitted he was the best player on the pitch by far.

The former Fettes pupil has moved back from his former position as a forward to take over a central midfield berth and the 25-year-old dictated play.

Imrie (pictured) coaxed his talented young squad to dominate new-look Inverleith throughout a torrid 60 minutes for the men in purple.

And, had it not been for the razor-sharp reflexes of Inverleith's rising star goalkeeper, Matthew Taylor, a Scotland under-21 player, then the scoreline would have been greater.

Basically, the speed and determination of the students told on Inverleith who were dragged out of their normal game into a high-speed encounter.

It was, said Inverleith coach, Alan Wall, not a good day at the office, but Imrie was pleased that his men recorded such an emphatic win over a city rival and he believes there is much more to come from his squad who have taken time to gel.

Imrie undoubtedly provides the inspiration. His calmness when under pressure, on one occasion holding off three Inverleith

players in a corner as the Purple drove deep looking for a spark to lift their game, was there for all to see.

And Imrie also provided punch in the danger zone, scoring two of the students five goals on a sun-kissed Autumn afternoon, perfect for hockey.

Scottish international Robbie Croll, a former Stewart's Melville pupil, also netted a double in the convincing win with Declan Bradley securing the other goal on a heady afternoon for the students.

There is obviously scoring potential plus as real desire in the squad. There is, however, much to learn about playing among Scotland's elite.

For example, the students recently led title-challenging Western Wildcats 4-1 at Auchenhowie before drawing 4-4. Game management is something they are working on.

On this occasion, they did not allow Inverleith to get a foothold, hustling and putting pressure on the ball carrier.

The Uni boys dominated the opening two quarters but it took until one minute before the break before they broke through.

Croll did the damage and how he celebrated. Their first attack of the second-half yielded a second from Imrie and from there their momentum continued to grow.

A third scored when Imrie fired the ball low into the net was followed by a fourth from Bradley before the close of the third quarter.

And the final goal came in the final quarter from Croll from a penalty stroke fired low into the backboard to round off a thoroughly satisfying day for the young coach who said: "We're getting stronger each week and we're developing as a unit."

His opposite number Wall said: "They (Edinburgh) played well.

We pride ourselves in sticking to our game plan but we played the way they wanted us to play.”

RESULTS: Saturday: Premiership: Watsonians 4, Hillhead 1; Grove Menzieshill 0, Grange 8; Kelburne 0, Western 9; Dunfermline Carnegie 3, Clydesdale 2; Uddingston 3, Dundee Wanderers 1; Inverleith 0, Edinburgh University 5.

Dan Pearson, Gary Clark and Liam Watt all netted as newly-promoted Dunfermline Carnegie retained a one-point lead at the top of the men's Premiership with a 3-2 home win over fourth-placed Clydesdale.

Fraser Heigh continued his early-season form, taking his tally to 15 goals in five games, with a treble for second-placed Grange in an 8-0 victory at second-bottom Grove Menzieshill.

Third-placed Western hammered arch West of Scotland rivals Kelburne 9-0 with Rob Harwood netting four while Dan Coultas and Paul Martin netted doubles as Watsonians beat lowly Hillhead 4-1.

Edinburgh University moved into mid-table with a 5-0 hammering of Inverleith thanks to doubles from Robbie Croll and player/coach Hamish Imrie while bottom club Dundee Wanderers remain pointless after eight games following a 3-1 defeat at Uddingston.