

Edinburgh University star Costello aims for first winners medal in Scottish Cup showdown with Watsonians

Amy Costello is currently engaged in a dissertation on performance and hydration in female athletes, and that could be an element in deciding who takes the silverware in Sunday's Scottish Hockey Cup Final (4pm, Peffermill Playing Fields, Edinburgh) if the thermometer creeps upwards as expected.

Costello's club, The University of Edinburgh, stand between Watsonians and a historic double after they won the Premiership for the first time in their history last month.

Eight points separated the teams at the end of the regular season, with Watsonians having taken seven of nine points available in games with the students by dint of two wins (3-0 and 4-2) and a 2-2 draw, Edinburgh University letting slip a slender one-goal lead in the dying minutes.

Finishing third left Costello (pictured with yellow bib in training with Scotland by **Nigel Duncan**) as a bridesmaid again, but the highly-rated, Edinburgh-born defender has certainly made her mark on the international hockey stage after an international breakthrough at the tender age of 16, playing for Scotland at the EuroHockey indoor championships.

A few weeks later, the Edinburgh-born star made her first outdoor appearance for Scotland against South Africa and progressed to a Great Britain debut, playing in every game in the Champions Trophy.

The 5f 9in tall player also featured heavily in the FIH Pro League and was Reserve at the Tokyo Olympics, but has never

won a medal, reaching the play-offs in Germany a high point so far.

Costello has over 90 caps for Great Britain and Scotland so earning her first winners' medal would be a career milestone, but she is acutely aware of the danger that Watsonians possess, with two of her Scottish international team-mates having key roles for the Tipperlin club.

Quicksilver, Edinburgh-born lawyer Sarah Jamieson carries a threat up-front, her darting runs and superb hands causing problems for domestic and international opposition.

And Dundee-born defender Emily Dark, a physics student at The University of St Andrews, is dangerous from set-pieces, possessing a thunderous shot, but soft-spoken Costello is measured in her approach and believes the university side have what it takes to win on a big occasion.

The 24-year-old said: "We will have to shut down Sarah as high up the pitch as we can and, as regards Emily, we can't give away anything cheaply, one mistake could cost us a goal."

Watsonians won 19, drew one and lost one of their 21 league fixtures, scoring 100 goals and letting in 12, while Edinburgh won 16 of their 21 games, losing three and drawing two, scoring 97 goals and letting slip 16.

Costello added: "Potentially, it will be a close game between the top two teams in Scotland, and victory would be a boost ahead of our trip to Turkey for the EuroHockey Challenge II tournament in early June."

Every little helps in a close game and the talented player added: "We have 60 minutes of hockey to play on Sunday and Edinburgh University students, I understand, can get in free so, hopefully, we can harness that to our advantage."