

# Scotland women book passport to top flight of European hockey

EuroHockey qualifiers: women: Scotland 4, Switzerland 2 (in Dunkirk)

Coach Chris Duncan yesterday praised his squad after securing a place for Scotland women amongst the elite of European hockey next summer.

The Tartan Hearts claimed their passport to Monchengladbach in Germany in August 2023 thanks to victory over Switzerland in Dunkirk in their EuroHockey qualifiers.

The 4-2 success followed a 4-0 victory over Austria in their opening game in France and a 2-0 success over their hosts and the tournament followed only days after Scotland claimed sixth place in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Three goals in two minutes provided the platform after Fiona Burnet had fired the Scots, ranked No 18 in the world, ahead from close range in the 17th minute.

Bronwyn Shields popped in No 2 after 28 minutes after a move involving captain Sarah Robertson and Jess Ross with follow-up counters coming from Heather McEwan 60 seconds later and then a fourth from a darting Sarah Jamieson run a minute later.

The Swiss, who finished bottom of the tournament with three straight defeats, had earlier been kept in the game by their two goalkeepers, Tanja Landtwing and Ursina Fazio, and they refused to buckle, scoring twice in two minutes from Sae Fontana and Raffaella Triebold after 44 and 46 minutes.

The Scots, driven forward by the outstanding Katie Robertson,

the vice-captain, held firm until the final whistle and Robertson from Freuchie in Fife, said: "We came here to claim a place in A Division and we have achieved that. We had hoped to medal in the Commonwealth Games, but we put that behind us and won our three games in France.

"We've put in a lot of hard work in the last few months and I'm proud of the team and their performance overall this summer."

Since May, Scotland women have played 21 games, winning 15, drawing two and losing four, and that's a record that Edinburgh-based coach Duncan said underlined their application and dedication.

Scotland's squad includes students, teachers and office workers as well as members of the Great Britain squad and Duncan said: "They have put a tremendous amount into the programme.

"It is mission accomplished here and we have been rewarded with a place among the elite of European hockey. Our goal is to make the top ten in the world and we have a long way to go and work to do, we know that, but we are heading in the right direction and the girls deserve full credit for what they have achieved."

PICTURE: Heather McEwan and Sarah Jamieson celebrate against Switzerland in Dunkirk courtesy of Scottish Hockey