

Grange boss salutes his table-topping squad

Martin Shepherdson, team manager of high-flying Grange, looked back on the first half of the men's Premiership hockey programme and said: "We can't complain."

The Edinburgh club top the 12-strong table, one point clear of last season's Grand Slam champions, Western, and progressed into the quarter-finals of the Scottish Cup following Sunday's 3-1 victory over Capital rivals Watsonians at Fettes.

Shepherdson was pitch side and he was frustrated in some aspects of Grange's performance but said: "We dominated the game, we just did not take our chances.

"We had a lot of circle entries, an area which we have been working on, which is great, we also had a lot of corners but did not make use of them, but I am pleased with the way we played.

"Our midfield and build-up play was excellent, creating spaces, getting people free and things we have been working on are really showing, but we should have been much more comfortable."

The club boast Scottish international, Duncan Riddell, and new Great Britain under-21 player, Fraser Heigh, and Shepherdson said: "They are a nightmare to defend against.

"When we work at getting them in space it works well. Guys like David Nairn and Gordon Amour did a great job (in the cup

tie with Watsonians) creating that space.”

Shepherdson said he was pleased with being top of the table and in the last eight of the cup but added: “It’s frustrating that we are not scoring more goals. The general standard of play we are happy with and we have a squad of players who keep going until the last minute.”

Grange captain David Forrester added: “Top of the league and in the quarter-final of the Scottish Cup, that was what we wanted at the start of the season, and now we have to build on that in the second-half of the season.

“We have character in the team and we showed that against Clydesdale and Edinburgh University. We pulled it out at the end and that is something we have added into our performances, something which was not there last season.

“Fraser Heigh is always a threat and so is Duncan (Riddell) and we are creating a lot of chances. Our focus in the second-half of the season is to be more efficient in the offensive D.

“We have a young team still and we have done well to incorporate the young players into the squad. They add to the team and it is looking good for the future.”

PICTURE: Grange coach Stevie Grubb (orange jacket) and Martin Shepherdson (far right) in the dugout as Grange beat Watsonians 3-1 at Fettes on Sunday. **Picture: Nigel Duncan**