

Hearts Women are on the up

Whisper it, but this could be the year Hearts Women finally finish above their rivals, Hibernian.

For years now, Hibernian Women have been a very strong side and have more often than not, had Hearts' number when the two teams have clashed.

Now however, it looks like Hearts Women are ready to mount a serious challenge.

Since the arrival of manager Eva Olid last summer, Hearts have made real progress on many fronts. Last season Hearts finished 8th in the ten team SWPL 1 league, however this project was always going to be a work in progress.

In March, Hearts Women announced they were moving to semi-professional status after outlining a budget to recruit and pay their players.

So far this season, they are reaping the rewards and you would have to say that for the first time, Hearts Women really do like a team that belongs in the top tier.

Under Olid, Hearts have improved in both boxes, having made some really astute signings in the summer. Jamaican internationalist, Vyan Sampson has joined alongside Emma Brownlie with the pair slotting in either side of club captain, Georgia Hunter in a solid back three.

Into midfield and Ireland's Ciara Grant brings real energy as well as composure in possession, the same can be said for Cailin Michie who is another shrewd pickup after impressing as

a trialist.

That duo protects that back three, which allows wingbacks, normally Jenny Smith and Gwen Davies, the freedom to play high, whilst also creating a free role for Erin Rennie or Scotland internationalist Rebecca McAllister in the number 10 role.

Up top, Hearts have the perfect combination of pace and power. New Zealand internationalist Katie Rood has serious pace to burn and as she showed with her recent goal against Hamilton, she is capable of making some clever runs in behind defences.

Her strike partner is Georgia Timms. The Hearts number 9 already has six goals for the season and will undoubtedly cause problems for any defence in the league.

Hearts have a good starting 11, but they also have options off the bench which is something they simply have not had at their disposal before.

In a league normally dominated by Rangers, Celtic and Glasgow City, Hearts have managed to give themselves a six-point gap in 4th spot to nearest challengers Partick Thistle, however two tough assignments are on the horizon.

This weekend, Hearts travel to Celtic, but having already competed against both Rangers and Glasgow City in narrow defeats this season, they will fancy their chances of taking something from that match.

The following Sunday is arguably the biggest Edinburgh Derby the women's game has ever seen as Easter Road hosts the first ever Capital Cup match between Hearts and Hibs.

Following the success of the fixtures last season which saw a combined total of 9,000 fans attend the matches at Easter Road and Tynecastle.

The Capital Cup agreement, supported by Baillie Gifford, will see the matches once again held at the two stadiums with tickets for both games free of charge.

There is a lot of football still to be played and both will do their talking on the pitch come the 27 November, but whisper it, the tide might just be starting to turn maroon.



15th December 2021 Edinburgh – Hearts celebrate after pulling on back during the SWFL1 game between Hearts and Hibs at Tynecastle. The visitors won 3-1 on the night.

PHOTO Live Edinburgh News



Hearts Women win SWPL2 in 2019 Photo: Scottish Women's Premier League