

Molotnikov deal underlines Hibs' pathway commitment

Talented teenager Rudi Molotnikov highlights Hibs' long-term ambition after penning three-year deal with the Easter Road club.

The 17-year-old joins nine first team signings in the summer transfer window so far and Molotnikov's new deal also highlights the Easter Road club's long-term vision and commitment to providing a pathway for home-grown players.

Molotnikov (pictured) spent time at Loanhead Miners and Lochend before joining Hibs in 2016 aged ten and he has gone from strength to strength, the attack-minded midfielder progressing through the academy age-groups before signing his first professional contract in summer 2022.

As a 15-year-old, he played a key role in helping Gareth Evans' under-18 squad secure the CAS Elite League and secure qualification for the UEFA Youth League.

Last season, he established himself as a key player in the under-19 UEFA Youth League squad and the Hibs Development Squad.

Molotnikov scored the winning goal against FC Nantes in the UEFA Youth League second round in France and featured in all five European games for the Hibernian under-19 squad.

He also helped Brian McLaughlin's under-17 Scotland squad qualify for the UEFA Euro Under-17 Championships before representing the Scots at the Finals in Hungary in May.

Recently, he has been heavily involved with Lee Johnson's first team squad, travelling to Marbella for the pre-season training camp, impressing in several pre-season friendlies and being named in the matchday squad for our UEFA Europa Conference League qualifying second round tie with Inter Club d'Escaldes from Andorra.

The player said: "I am absolutely delighted to extend my stay at this amazing club, which I have supported all my life.

"Coming through the Academy and getting my first contract was a big achievement for me and now I have been given another chance to kick on even further.

"It has been amazing to play with the first team recently and play in front of the fans. Now my focus is on working hard and trying to establish a place in the team going forward."

Gareth Evans, Hib's academy director, commented: "Rudi has followed our player pathway all the way through the age-groups since the under-11s, so it is fantastic to see him progress all the way up to the first team and to be given an opportunity.

"He is a great example to the younger players within the Academy as he has shown that if you have the right attitude and if you work hard then you will be given a chance at this football club.

Evans added: "He is a great boy and is a credit to both himself and his family and we are all looking forward to following his progress over the next few years at Hibs."

Lee Johnson, Hibernian's first team manager, said: "I have been delighted with Rudi's application and attitude in recent months, as well as his natural ability which has earned him this new contract.

"He has adapted well to the first team environment and is a

good example of the player pathway we have in place for our young players at Hibs. The hard work for Rudi really starts now, but we all believe in him and are rooting for him to do well."