

# **Robertson loss huge blow for Scots ahead of Euros**

**Scotland's captain and Olympian, Sarah Robertson, has been ruled out of the EuroHockey Championship in Germany later this month through injury.**

The Borders-born, former University of Edinburgh University player, who is in the current Great Britain squad, has missed the build-up games and now comes confirmation that she will not be on the plane to Germany.

Fife-born schoolteacher Katie Robertson (University of Edinburgh) takes over as captain with vastly experienced goalkeeper, Amy Gibson, who plays for Dundee-based Grove Menzieshill, is her vice-captain.

Four players are from the University of Edinburgh and three play abroad in Germany, Belgium and Holland. Eight players compete at the EuroHockey Championships for the first time and Scotland qualified after winning the qualifiers in Dunkirk, France, last summer with three wins straight wins to qualify for the A Division.

The host nation, Germany, ranked at No 4 in the world, are Scotland's first Pool B opponents on Friday 18 August at (19:30) in front of a full house. The following evening Scotland face Ireland (20:15), ranked no 13, before they play England, ranked No 6, on Tuesday, 22 August (12:30).

Crossovers then take place to determine the final placings

with the top six teams securing qualification for the tournament in 2015 and the bottom two entering qualifiers in 2024.

The squad, ranked No 18 in the world, blends experience and emerging talent and has recently recorded an excellent series away to England and two wins over Czech Republic, rated No 23, in Edinburgh, and, during the build-up, the Scots have played Ireland and Wales, rated No 26, as well as world No 2 ranked Australia, and China, ranked No 11.

Chris Duncan, Scotland's Edinburgh-based, head coach, believes the squad have made enormous strides in the last 18 months, both on and off the pitch.

He added: "Our performances last summer (in Dunkirk) were testament to the style of play and approach we want to be known for moving forward.

"The work done since securing our place from the European qualifier last August in France has allowed us to go into greater depth of detail on the technical elements of our game and skill set to try and make further strides in our ability to perform consistently against top sides."

He stressed: "We know how tough it is to play against Europe's elite, but we are ambitious about our long-term goals, and our short-term objectives, so are looking forward to the challenges ahead in Germany.

"Most important to us is staying committed to our philosophy and how we can cause problems for the excellent sides that we will play."

The coach said this was a team selection that can compete here and now, but also a nod to the future. Duncan added: "Eight players will experience the EuroHockey Championships for the first time and with 11 players 25-years-old or younger, there is great longevity in this group.

“We are naturally disappointed to not be able to include our captain Sarah Robertson, who is recovering from injury, she will be an enormous loss, both on and off the pitch for us, but Katie Robertson will be a phenomenal captain of the side and will be ably assisted by Amy Gibson as vice-captain.”

And Duncan concluded: “The secret to success in sport is the depth of your squad and the collective effort of each and every one of our squad has set us up to represent Scotland with pride.

“Our Pool (in Germany) is challenging, but opening the tournament against the host-side in front of a packed crowd is something we are all excited about, and Ireland and England are two sides that we know well.

“We travel with optimism, knowing that we have nothing to lose, and will play with freedom as we try to further foster our attacking style.”

SCOTLAND: Amy Costello (Surbiton), Amy Gibson (Grove Menzieshill), Bronwyn Shields, Millie Steiger (Clydesdale Western), Charlotte Watson (Beeston), Ellie Wilson, Sarah Jamieson (Watsonians), Eve Pearson, Jess Ross, Katie Robertson, Sophie Hinds (University of Edinburgh), Fiona Burnet (Wimbledon), Heather McEwan (Royal Victory, Belgium), Jennifer Eadie (Wimbledon), Jessica Buchanan (Sevenoaks), Katie Birch (Durham University), Laura Swanson (Der Club An Der Alster, Germany), Ruth Blaikie (AMVJ, Holland)

PICTUE: Robertson playing for Scotland before her injury