

Stewart's Melville hoping their new gym will help next season

Stewart's Melville are hopeful a new gym will help them with a more successful season when club rugby gets underway at the beginning of next month.

The Inverleith outfit had a disappointing '22-23 league season and will play in Division Two of the Tennent's National Leagues after dropping down.

However, re-appointed captain Jamie Sword, pictured in action against Aberdeen Grammar last season, says that rather than sit dwelling on misfortune the club have reacted positively and invested in bricks and mortar as a way forward.

"We have just converted a shed previously used by physios into a gymnasium with extra emphasis placed on strength and conditioning" said the 25-year-old second row.

Stew Mel have always been renowned for sparkling back play but tended to come unstuck when lightweight forward packs were worn down on heavy grounds in winter.

Jamie added: "We could either live in denial (about last season) and say we were unlucky. Or we could be upfront and recognise where we needed to improve.

"Hopefully the gym will help us address an area where the club have long been at a comparative disadvantage and help us

remain powerful at the end of games.

“Also when winter arrives and some games are called off we now have somewhere to go to sweat a bit and lift some tin!”

Only scrum half Fraser Strachan has felt obliged to move on due to family reasons leaving Arran Porteous and Charles Burrowes to fight it out for the No 9 shirt but several others are back from long term injury.

These include midfield backs James Ferguson and Jamie McGurk while prolific try scorer Michael Jamieson – “he must have scored 75 per cent of our tries last season” says Sword – is expected to remain to a major strike force on the wing.

And there is more good news with back row Curtis Williams and front row Hayden Hart arriving from New Zealand.

Off the field, too, Andy Kelly, ex-Edinburgh hooker, has returned to the club he served with distinction as a player having gained valuable coaching experience in Hong Kong and at Heriot’s. Andy will lead assisted by Alex Hagart.



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