

# **Webster is back at Hearts**

**Andy Webster played 272 games for Heart of Midlothian in all competitions during two spells, the second of which ended in 2013, now the popular retired player is back to guide the potential stars of the future.**

The Dundee-born former central defender has been appointed as the Tynecastle club's new academy manager, taking over from Frankie McAvoy.

Webster is a former Scottish Cup winner with Hearts and he left his role as St Mirren's head of the professional game to help shape the future at Tynecastle.

It's a key role as the Jambos aim to develop their own top talent and the 41-year-old will oversee all aspects of the club's Football Academy at Oriam situated at Riccarton, in the extensive Heriot-Watt University complex, on the outskirts of the city.

The 28-times capped Scotland defender has overall responsibility for coach education, developing young talent and continuing to build the pathway from youth level to the first team.

And he knows that path having been signed by Hearts for £75,000 as a raw 18-year-old after making 17 appearances for Arbroath between 1999 and 2001.

Between 2001 and 2006, Webster made 149 appearances for the Men in Maroon before moving across the Border to play for Wigan Athletic. He came back to Scotland to join Rangers, where he endured three seasons of injury problems, then back south to Bristol City.

Dundee United was his next port of call on loan where he won the Scottish Cup in 2010 before he returned to Gorgie in February 2011 to make 73 appearances. One of them was in the Scottish Cup Final of 2012 when the Gorgie boys swept to victory by thrashing city rivals Hibs.

He moved on again made 71 appearances for Coventry City and returned to Scotland to join St Mirren, playing of The Buddies on 47 occasions. Webster then hung up his boots and switching to work with the Paisley club's under-18, under-20 and reserve teams.

Joe Savage, sporting director, paid tribute to the work of Webster's predecessor, Frankie McAvoy, who, he said, did a great job during his near 18-months in the role.

Of course, McAvoy has stepped-up to become the club's head coach and Savage said: "It was vital that we brought in someone who could not only carry on that good work but take it even further forward.

"In Andrew, we believe we have that person. He has amassed tremendous experience at St Mirren and, of course, this is a place he knows extremely well thanks to his hugely- successful playing career here.

"We're excited to have him on board and looking forward to him using his skills for the benefit of our Football Academy."

