

# Champions Watsonians still under-strength

FIXTURES: Saturday: Glasgow University v University of St Andrews; Watsonians v Gordonians; Grange v Clydesdale (2pm, Fettes); GHK v Inverleith (14.15, Old Anniesland); Uddingston v Edinburgh University (2.30, Uddingston Cricket and Sports Club). Sunday: Clydesdale v GHK; Hillhead v Glasgow University; Inverleith v Western Wildcats; University of St Andrews v Uddingston; Gordonians v Grange (13.30, Aberdeen Sports Village); Edinburgh University v Watsonians (15.00).

Keith Smith, Watsonians head coach, goes into this weekend's double-header, which includes a joust with one of their main title rivals, still minus injured and unavailable players.

Last season's Grand Slam winners are, however, closer to full-strength than they were for their season opening game in the Scottish Premiership, a 2-1 road victory at another of their expected title rivals, Clydesdale Western.

International player Mairi Drummond plus Katie Stott, Katie Crawford, Katie MacCallum and Molly Murphy are all available for selection and Smith revealed: "Having reduced numbers last Saturday forced us to adapt our game a little bit to try to compensate for that.

"It definitely made it harder to maintain the sort of tempo we would normally like to play at. Hopefully, we can get back to those sorts of levels this weekend."

Edinburgh University come into play this weekend for the first time and coach Sam Judge is looking forward to kick-starting their campaign for silverware and they travel to Uddingston now under new coach Gareth Ikin. His squad signalled their intentions with a 5-3 win at Gordonians last Saturday.

Ikin is excited to have both the men and women at Uddingston on Saturday for their first home games of the season with champions Grange visiting in the men's Premiership. He said: "Both teams have been strong forces in the Premiership over recent years and will provide a strong challenge. It will be interesting to see how we compete against teams of their stature."

He sees Sunday's trip to the University of St Andrews as an opportunity to continue building on performances and growing into the season and the game will, he feels, provide a different challenge to Saturday's fixture.

Inverleith were whipped 6-0 at home by Edinburgh rivals Grange last weekend and travel to GHK on Saturday, a side who also slipped to defeat last time out, a 2-0 reverse at Western Wildcats. On Sunday, Inverleith host Wildcats who entertain Hillhead on Friday (20.15 at Auchenhowie).

Grange entertain Clydesdale on Saturday and make the long trip north to Aberdeen Sports Village on Sunday to face Gordonians while Glasgow University and the University of St Andrews enter the competition by facing each other in the West of Scotland on Saturday. Glasgow then travel to city rivals Hillead on Sunday while St Andrews host new-look Uddingston.

PICTURE: Flashback to last season, Uddingston v Watsonians, by ***Nigel Duncan***