

Homfray back for title-chasing Western

Fixtures: Saturday: men: Edinburgh University v Grove Menzieshill (13.00, Peffermill); Watsonians v Clydesdale; Western Wildcats v Erskine Stewart's Melville; Dundee Wanderers v Hillhead; Kelburne v Inverleith; Uddingston v Grange (16.30, Uddingston Cricket and Sports Club): Sunday: Erskine Stewart's Melville v Kelburne; Clydesdale v Western Wildcats; Dundee Wanderers v Edinburgh University (noon); Grange v Watsonians (13.00); Hillhead v Uddingston (13.00, Upper Windybridge); Inverleith v Grove Menzieshill (13.00, The Mary Erskine School).

Western Wildcats welcome back three players, including Nikki Homfray who has been playing in Australia, as they face a double-header this weekend.

Edinburgh side Erskine Stewart's Melville (ESM) visit on Saturday and Western travel across Glasgow to square-up to Clydesdale on Sunday.

Steven Percy, Western's coach, said also returning are Adam McKenzie and Fraser Calder after recovering from injuries which forced them out of last Saturday's emphatic 6-2 win at Inverleith.

The coach added: "We've have a stronger squad than we did last week and it's our first home game. We'll enjoy that comfort, but the goal remains unchanged, to win and build momentum towards the EuroHockey League."

For the record, Western travel to Barcelona in early October for the EuroHockey K016 but ESM come into the game following a 2-1 home defeat to Edinburgh rivals Watsonians last weekend.

Percy said: "ESM are an improving side. Their cup run last

season and their retained Premiership status shows that. However, we'll be as professional as ever and look to take all the points."

Grange aim to follow up their 3-1 home victory over Dundee Wanderers with wins at Uddingston on Saturday and at home to Watsonians on Sunday and coach Stevie Grubb will look for a quicker start to the game than he had against the Tayside team last week.

His combinations up-front are also taking time to gel but Grubb wants an action replay of the second-half against Wanderers when they dominated possession and gained control.

Edinburgh University play for the first time after sitting out last weekend's fixtures and come into the fray after a recent, short trip to Antwerp where they played three games, a 1-0 defeat to Dragons second team, a 4-3 win over Royal Antwerp Hockey Club, a former club of the students' coach, Hamish Imrie, and a 3-0 success over Braxgata H2.

Scottish international Imrie said: "It was a great experience for the squad to play together as we have a lot of new players and some really challenging games ahead."

Imrie added: "We are ready to go and looking forward to four games in eight days (in all competitions, including student games in BUCS) which is exciting."

Grove beat Kelburne 4-2 on Tayside last Saturday and Imrie said that was a good win which his men must take note of.

Dundee Wanderers host Hillhead and Edinburgh University looking to use home advantage seeking points to get off the mark in this year's campaign.

PICTURE: Action from a previous clash between Western and ESM at Inverleith by **Nigel Duncan**

