

Rising star Green set to go against students

Jamie Green could be a marked man as Grange square-up to The University of Edinburgh in the feature clash in the men's Scottish Premiership at Peffermill on Saturday (13.25).

The 18-year-old bagged his first senior hat-trick as Scottish Premiership pace-setting Grange beat FSEG Clydesdale 9-0 in Edinburgh last weekend, but the highly-talented teenager didn't celebrate because he has grown up in the Clydesdale family, playing in all the youth teams before moving along the M8 during the close season to Grange.

The triple whammy came in seven glorious, first quarter, minutes at Fettes and underlined the development of the rising star who broke into the Scotland senior squad last summer.

His treble arrived at the right time as Grange prepare for possibly their biggest test so far this term. The students are second in the table and going well.

Grange, however, have not dropped a point so far this term, winning all nine matches and scoring 42 goals and conceding only seven, and this is a potentially season-defining clash.

The hard-running students edged Western Wildcats 6-4 at the same venue last Saturday, holding a 5-1 lead at one stage in the contest which proved to be one of the games of the season so far, before edging Uddingston 3-2 in Lanarkshire to close

to within six points of Grange with a game in hand.

Imrie's men have also scored 39 goals and lost 12 for the second best goal difference in the 12-strong table. Green, who is on a four-year business course at Heriot-Watt University, hence the move to the East of the country, said: "The outcome could be huge."

Saturday's fixture is also Grange's final one in the first-half of the season before the winter break and it could be psychologically damaging to surrender the 100 per cent record in such a key fixture and have until February 17 to reflect.

The quicksilver player from Busby near Glasgow said: "It would be really good to get a positive result on Saturday."

Grange coach, Stevie Grubb, is leaving nothing to chance and he was an interested spectator at Peffermill to see The University of Edinburgh against Western last Saturday.

The champions, however, into the clash minus former university captain, Robbie Croll, who suffered extensive bruising to his shoulder in the recent win at struggling city rivals Erskine Stewart's Melville.

Grubb confirmed that David Nairn is also missing and added: "We had two additional players available for selection this week which left us the challenge of maintaining the balance of the squad that was successful last week. Hopefully, we have managed that.

"I watched the Edinburgh University game last weekend and get a feel for how Hamish (Imrie) has them playing this season and, from what I saw, I think we can all look forward to an exciting game of hockey."

Hamish Imrie, player/coach to The University of Edinburgh, said the prospects were for an exciting game against Grange

and also a challenge to see how his men can compete against the champions from last season.

Imrie has a few injuries from the 6-4 win over Western Wildcats and he said: "We'll see how they recover in the next couple of days."

Rob Harwood, skipper of Western Wildcats, said it was a tough defeat at The University of Edinburgh last Saturday. They are now playing catch-up but he added: "We are looking to bounce back. It is important the squad sticks together and it is now about doing our job and hoping we get help from elsewhere."

Hamish Galt, A J Lochrin, Nikki Homfray and Luc Hermsen are missing this weekend as they travel to play Glasgow rivals Kelburne and Harwood said: "They will all be back in the second-half of the season which will be a real boost as they are big losses."

Paul Taylor has injury concerns ahead of Inverleith's home clash with Uddingston which he says is a massive game for the club.

Coach Taylor said: "We have a few unavailable, unfortunately, but we look forward to the game and know that if we want to be playing top six hockey (in the second-half of the season) then we have got to get a result."

FSEG Clydesdale coach Ciaran Crawford reports that Steven McKnight and Euan Lindsay picked up knocks last week but otherwise he has a full squad available for their home game against Hillhead.

Watsonians women's coach Keith Smith confirmed he is closer to having a full squad but there are still two missing ahead of their clash with Capital rivals Grand Edinburgh Ladies.

Anna Logan is on a career break and is travelling so will be unavailable until after the winter break.

Smith added: "Grange have plenty of talented youngsters and have added a number of players with Premiership experience this season to bolster that. It will be a good contest and results so far have shown how dangerous Grange can be so we'll need to make sure we are ready for that."

Scottish Premiership: Saturday: men: Edinburgh University v Grange (13.25); Erskine Stewart's Melville v Dundee Wanderers; FSEG Clydesdale v Hillhead; Grove Menzieshill v Watsonians; Kelburne v Western Wildcats (12.20); Inverleith v Uddingston (13.30).

Women: Clydesdale v The University of Edinburgh; Grange Edinburgh Ladies v Watsonians; Hillhead v Gordonians; Inverleith v University of St Andrews (11.45, Loretto School);

GHK v Uddingston (14.15, Old Anniesland); Western Wildcats v Glasgow University (14.30, Auchenhowie). Sunday: Clydesdale Western v GHK; Hillhead v Inverleith (13.00, Upper Windyedge).

PICTURE: Grange cruising to victory over Capital rivals ESM in a recent Premiership clash. Picture by **Nigel Duncan**