

# **No complacency from Grange as hockey season resumes**

**Grange men celebrated at the final whistle which confirmed a 3-1 win over The University of Edinburgh in a key Scottish Premiership game as the Capital combine bid to defend the title. That was on November 18, last year.**

Hostilities re-start on Saturday with Grange heading for fifth-placed Hillhead and looking down at the rest in the Scottish Premiership table with satisfaction of a job well done, so far.

No wonder, as new-look Grange completed the first half of the season with an unblemished record of 30 points and a goal difference of 37, for 45 against eight.

Western Wildcats are second with 24 points from the same number of games and they have a goal difference of 29 (for 47 against 18) while The University of Edinburgh are third also on 24 points but with a goal difference of 27 (for 46 against 19). All three have played ten games.

Grange captain Alan Johnston takes a pragmatic view and is quick to reflect that there is still a lot of hockey to play if the Edinburgh club want to secure back-to-back title wins. Confidence was high at the winter shutdown after beating both of their nearest challengers, The University of Edinburgh and Western Wildcats.

Looking back at their final game against the hard-running students, Johnston believes that the early goal from one of their leading players, Dylan Bean, was, key and they held onto possession in a bid to kill the game in the final quarter.

The skipper added: "We've beaten second and third in the league, but we can take nothing for granted. Yes, having a nice cushion going into the second-half of the season is going to help us massively, and it will give us confidence, but we are aware of complacency.

"However, I believe we have enough players in the team who have won leagues and cups to guard against that and we will tell the young boys in the team to keep doing the right things."

Robbie Croll, a former captain of The University of Edinburgh, could be back after damaging a shoulder in a league game at Erskine Stewart's Melville and Cale Walsh, one of Grange's assistant coaches, tweaked a hamstring early in the contest with the students and he was withdrawn for the remainder of the game.

Johnston said the win over The University of Edinburgh does not define the season but he added: "It is a nice marker for us and the team has developed well since the start of the season.

"We had four 18-year-old players come into the team and also added some new players. We had a big turnover in the summer and we knew it would be hard to gel quickly, but we found form."

And he suggested to the chasing pack: "You have not seen the best of Grange yet."

FIXTURES: Men: Saturday: Kelburne v The University of Edinburgh; Watsonians v Inverleith; Dundee Wanderers v FSEG

Clydesdale (13.30); Uddingston v Erskine Stewart's Melville (15.00); Hillhead v Grange (13.30). Sunday: Dundee Wanderers v Kelburne (12.00).

Women: Saturday: Glasgow University v Gordonians; Grange Edinburgh Ladies v Western Wildcats; GHK v Hillhead (14.15). Sunday: GHK v Grange Edinburgh Ladies (14.15).

FLASHBACK: Grange after their win over The University of Edinburgh in November at Peffermill. Johnston is on the right of the front row. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***