

Kennedy strikes and it's gold for Scots in under-21 Euros

Zara Kennedy, who plays club hockey for The University of Edinburgh, was the toast of her Scotland under-21 teammates in Konya.

The player, one of seven University of Edinburgh students in the squad, netted early on and Scotland held their nerve to win gold and preserve their 100 per cent record in the Turkey-based event.

Scotland beat Ukraine 3-1 in their opening match of the EuroHockey II-B tournament and followed up with a 2-1 victory over Poland and a 4-0 win over the hosts.

Coach Jimmy Culnane's bonus for success in Turkey is qualification for the Junior World Cup next year and this is the first time since 2005 that the Scotland under-21 women have qualified for that event. A venue has yet to be announced.

This will be Scotland's third appearance in the world event and qualification is, without doubt, a significant result given the opposition, the travel, a flight then a four-hour bus trip into deepest Turkey, and also the heat which, on occasions, topped 30c.

Scottish Hockey bosses were quick to complement the squad on social media and one message said: "Huge congratulations to the team. A 100 per cent record."

Barry Cawte, the former chief executive officer of Scottish

Hockey, said: "Trust in the process."

PICTURE: Jimmy Culnane focused during a recent training session for Scotland's women at Peffermill. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***