

Can Rudi follow in the footsteps of Hibs giants?

Hibs fans like nothing more than seeing a youngster break through the ranks and cement a regular place in the first team. Particularly when it's an attacking player with the ability to get supporters off their seats.

Derek Riordan and Garry O'Connor springs to mind but incredibly it was more than 20-years ago when 'Deek' and 'Gaz' made their debuts.

Older fans recall John Collins and Mickey Weir lighting up Easter Road and even older fans remember the likes of Peter Cormack, Peter Marinello and perhaps the greatest of them all, Joe Baker.

And while it is far too early to add Rudi Molotnikov to that list of legends, the teenager has done enough during the club's Premier Sports Cup group matches to provide some optimism amongst the faithful.

The 18-year-old who has already represented Scotland at Under-17 and Under 19 levels played his part Hibs opening day victory over Elgin City then fulfilled a lifelong dream to score his first goal at Easter Road in a 5-1 victory over Queen's Park.

Speaking after that match Molotnikov said: "I just saw the

ball drop to Josh Campbell and it was the perfect pass from him. I couldn't have asked for any better. I've been thinking about that moment since I was young. And for it to happen with my family up in the stand was perfect.

"I think the players who have come around me and made me feel part of this team, they've allowed me to express myself and be myself as a player.

"The gaffer (David Gray) has made me feel like I'm at home, and that this is where he wants me to be.

"There are a lot more games to come, hopefully. And I've got to keep proving to myself, and proving to him, that I should be starting each game. Hopefully I do. Then we'll take it from there."

Head Coach David Gray also singled out his contribution to the cup campaign. "Rudi was excellent again. He was great against Elgin City at the weekend and he is doing really well at the moment.

"He needs to keep working hard, he is someone that has taken his opportunity in pre-season. He was around the First Team a lot last season and he has come back in great condition. He wants to push himself all the time, he needs to keep doing that and work on the areas that he can improve on, but we saw tonight the quality he has got.

One man who knows about getting the fans on their feet is team mate Martin Boyle who also provided a ringing endorsement.

"He's come in, the gaffer has given him the opportunity and he's grabbed it. He's look sharp in training and has that finishing instinct. He loves to get at players, gets people off their seats and obviously we have to keep encouraging that.

"He's a young boy and will make mistakes. But he's brave and

at that age it's great. Hopefully he can have a fantastic career. I would tell him to just listen to what the manager has to say, listen to the staff, keep your head down and work hard. Don't be afraid to make mistakes.

"When I was young and coming through, I probably gave the ball away 90 times in a game. Neil Lennon said just keep doing what you're doing, getting on the ball and being as positive as you can – and everything will fall into place. He's broken through way younger than I was and it's fantastic to see the younger generation coming through; hopefully there's more to follow."