

Sammy hangs up her boots but with a new sponsor challenge in mind

There's a new captain at Edinburgh Caledonia – Sophie Davies – and Michael Eardley will be undertaking his first full season as coach, assisted by Scott MacDonald, overseeing a team with a couple of fresh faces.



Sammy Hyett, left, with '24-25 team captain Sophia Davies.



Sammy's nine-year-old pug, Arnold, is the Caledonian ladies mascot.

But a major piece of the Edinburgh Caledonia Ladies jigsaw will be missing when the team take the field for their first fixture of the SWFA League One season against Giffnock at Meadowbank on 11 August.

After a near lifetime of playing 38-year-old Sammy Hyett has, like Andy Murray, listened to her body and decided it is time to concede defeat to injury and retire.

But while Murray ponders his next move Hyett, existing club

chair and senior lead, has already determined she will inherit the team manager's role from ex-internationalist Maggie Wilson and already she has identified areas that need to be addressed to keep the club she formed in 2011 on a secure footing. How befitting of someone who earns a living as a project manager!

Inevitably that challenge revolves around ways of improving the club's finances, an initial step being to meet with Edinburgh Leisure at which she will emphasise the community aspects of a club aiming to keep developing by introducing both walking football and futsal, a five a side version played indoors with a small, harder, lower bounce ball which encourages control and passing skills.

But Caledonian's situation is rather unique, as Sammy explains: "We play our home games alongside Hibs Ladies at Meadowbank, thus also pay the same prices but without the same (financial) backing! To date we have been self-funded. On uprise of youth through our player pathway we have a lot more students unable to sustain their own fees. (So) we seek sponsorship to try to subsidise their fees and ensure all players get to play.

"It's an upward battle to keep up with more recognised teams like Hibs and Hearts."

If anybody can meet the challenge it is the indefatigable Hyett whose retirement has been prompted by sciatica linked to a hamstring torn at the root.

But there have been challenges overcome previously.

These include meeting criteria to play in the competitive, as opposed to recreational, side of the sport in Scotland which meant establishing a youth pathway. This led to an agreement with Currie Girls FC.

But the time is now right to put cards on the table and launch a bigger appeal, Hyett remarking:

“Hopefully our circumstances will be recognised in our upcoming meeting will be the encouragement we are giving women to play sport.”

- Able to assist? E-mail chair@edinburghcaledoniafc.co.uk