

Rising star Jack following in mum's footsteps

Charlie Jack comes from sound, hockey-playing stock. His Jedburgh-born mother, Janet, a former Great Britain and Scotland player, has captained Scotland's women Over 55s in the Masters World Cup and has been a stalwart for Fjordhus Reivers Hockey, the largest hockey club in the Borders.

No surprise then that Charlie has followed in his famous mum's prodigious footsteps and his carving a career for himself in the sport north of the Border.

He is big in stature and a huge influence for Edinburgh club side Inverleith who are endeavouring to carve a niche for themselves in the men's Premiership and, at the same time, develop raw, teenage talent, a difficult scenario.

However, the Purple have a sound track record in bringing through young players and, on Saturday, they had eight under-18 players in their line-up against Watsonians who have started the season well, collecting back-to-back wins (7-0 over Dundee Wanderers and 3-1 against Inverleith) to top the 12-strong table on goal difference from Western Wildcats and defending champions Grange.

Charlie patrolled the back line for most of the game against

Watsonians and was vociferous on the pitch. He was particularly vocal at the end of each quarter, and at half-time, exhorting his team-mates to up their game.

They listened and clawed their way back to 2-1 after going 2-0 down following two penalty corner strikes after 14 and 20 minutes by Watsonians. That goal after 23 minutes provided a platform and a foothold in a game in which Watsonians had dominated possession, but, sadly, the euphoria lasted for around 60 seconds as the men in maroon, carrying the colours of George Watson's College, the school which Charlie's mum attended, struck a third which proved decisive in an entertaining game in a depressing drizzle at The Mary Erskine School.

Post-match, Charlie was philosophical about the result and preferred to focus on the long-term journey for the Capital club. He may only be 21, but the employee of Musselburgh-based Loretto School has much to offer and admitted: "Yes, we have a very young side. There is a lot we need to work on."

Inverleith did not attract new blood over the close season but Charlie said: "We have youth talent and boys who will be with us for the next two years, at least."

The spirited performance in the defeat, which was a step-up from the disappointment of a 7-1 thrashing at Uddingston in their Premiership opener, augurs well for the future and the Scotland under-21 player underlined the club's desire to blood new, young players despite playing the elite of men's hockey in Scotland.

The Purple are currently pointless and second-bottom of the table, bracketed with Erskine Stewart's Melville, newly-promoted Dunfermline Carnegie, and bottom-club Dundee Wanderers, but it is early in the season.

However, setbacks and understanding how to hang in there and dig out points is all part of a learning process for the squad

and Charlie said: "We have a history of youth development at this club and we have a number of really talented young players in our system. Some will aspire to reach the higher echelons of hockey and others just want to play the sport."

The job of coaches within the club is to develop those players to give of their best and the youngsters, bolstered by some experienced men, showed bags of desire and also snapshots of their talent against a strong, well-organised Watsonians outfit coached by former Great Britain squad player, and Scotland international, Dan Coultas.

Jedburgh-born Charlie conceded that it was a body blow to surrender a goal to Watsonians seconds after getting back in the game at 2-1 with a well-constructed, breakaway strike down the right, but that is part of the steep learning curve that many of the Inverleith players are now on.

He conceded: "We spoke (in the huddle) about the minutes after scoring being so important and how we must focus and also about conceding from penalty corners. We want to compete against these teams and we have to learn to do those elements better if we want to make an impact."

Wise words from a young man who appears to be going places in hockey and who has a cool head on extremely broad shoulders.