

Lions add to their pride ahead of National League campaign

Ice Hockey

Lee Valley Lions have been gearing up for the new season with a series of trials for their squad.

A number of last season's favourites have already resigned for the team, including Players' Player of the Year, Calum Heath, and Canada-born player-coach, Blair Dubyk.

Dubyk is excited to add more players to the team, including Richard Hodge, who is returning for his fifth season with the Lions.

Dubyk said: "Hodgie had a good year last year, despite not getting on the scoresheet as often as he would have liked.

"His stats may not have been what he wanted them to be, but he's the guy who starts the play from his own end, always in position and reliable.

"Every team needs guys like him and it is really great to have him back."

Another boost to the

squad is former Lion, Scott Beeson.

Beeson returns to the team after stints in the English National League One with Haringey Greyhounds and Invicta Dynamos.

"Scott and I spoke late last season about the possibility of him coming back to Lee Valley," recalled Dubyk.

"But the transfer deadline was just days away.

Big asset

"I know Scott as a hard-working forward who can put the puck in the net and there is no doubting that he will be a big asset to the team."

This season the Lions have announced a new netminder who joins existing keepers, Ruth Cattell and George Alley.

Steve Grout makes his way over to Lee Valley after playing numerous years with the Invicta Mustangs.

"Steve contacted us at the beginning of training

camp, wanting a change of scenery," Dubyk said of Grout.

"He brings years of knowledge and experience to help with our other two goalies and I have already noticed a positive change in our goaltending.

"With three of them fighting for the number-one spot, I expect them to stay sharp, not only in games but in practices.

"And it has been working."

Lee Valley Lions begin their English National League South Two campaign on Saturday August 3 and the team will be looking to build on last season's 10th-place finish.

Before then though, the Lions will also be taking part in a pre-season friendly against English National League South One side Streatham Redskins in aid of Cancer Research.

The game will take place in Streatham on August 21, with face-off scheduled for 4.30pm.



■ Canada-born Blair Dubyk has re-signed for the Lee Valley Lions ahead of the new season
Pic: Julianne Bonner