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**FORMER ‘GERS’ PLAYER AND TOP SPORTS SURGEON AGREES SPONSORSHIP OF SCOTLAND’S AMPUTEE FOOTBALL TEAM**

**World-renowned orthopaedic surgeon, Professor Gordon Mackay of The Mackay Clinic, has agreed a three-year sponsorship deal with Scotland’s national Amputee Football team.**

The announcement of the partnership comes as the Scotland team prepares to compete in the inaugural Amputee Football Nations League in October 2023. The support from the Mackay Clinic will fund essential equipment, travel, facility hire, training kit and match strips.

Amputee Football Association Scotland (AFAS) was founded in 2017 to create opportunities for those with limb loss to participate in the beautiful game. AFAS is a Game Leader of Scottish Para-Football, the Scottish FA’s National Association and governing body for all forms of para football in Scotland.

The sponsorship will also ensure that the charity’s junior players can attend the highly-anticipated annual four-day training camp organised by the European Amputee Football Association. The camp will take place in August in Poland and will bring together more than 100 young amputees from across Europe to train and play football.

Professor Mackay is no stranger to the beautiful game, enjoying a stint as an aspiring player with Rangers in his youth before being drawn back to the field of medicine where he is now an International sports surgeon.

His speciality is in innovation in the field of tendon and ligament repair, and he is the inventor of the InternalBrace repair technique and President of the InternalBrace International Study Group, (IBISG).

Amputee football is unexpectedly fast paced, dynamic and physically gruelling on the upper body. It is well established across the world, with leagues operating in more than 30 countries worldwide. The Amputee Football World Cup took place in Istanbul, Turkey in October 2022, where hosts Turkey triumphed over former champions Angola in a nail-biting 4-1 defeat.

Scotland currently plays in the Irish Amputee Football league. The game is played on crutches with teams of seven-a-side. Those in goals must have an upper limb amputation while those outfield a lower amputation.

Organised by the European Amputee Football Federation, Scotland is in Group D of the Amputee Football Nations League in October, and will host the group stages of the competition in Fife. It will be the biggest amputee football event to take place on Scottish soil with Scotland facing teams from Hungary, Azerbaijan, Albania, Kosovo and The Netherlands.

On supporting the team, Mackay commented: “Jackie and I feel inspired by the courage and ability displayed by those who play this challenging sport, not only on the pitch but behind the scenes supporting one another as a community. The sport offers tremendous encouragement to those who have recovered from serious illness and injury or are in the process of recovery and dreaming of a return to sport.”

**Ashley Reid, founder of Amputee Football Association Scotland and CEO of the Scottish FA’s Scottish Para-Football organisation,** added: “The support from The Mackay Clinic will have an enormous impact – from ensuring we can compete in our first major competition to funding a once in a lifetime opportunity for our younger players in Poland. Gordon fits right in with the team and couldn’t help himself joining in for training – although I think he underestimated the effort required to play on crutches!

“We are both hugely grateful and overwhelmed at the support from The Mackay Clinic and look forward to seeing the benefits of the partnership come to fruition.”

After each match, AFAS will announce the Mackay Man of the Match.

**Notes to Editors:**

**Photographs show:** On Sunday [4 June 2023], Gordon attended training with the senior Scotland squad to meet the players.

**About Amputee Football**

* Amputee football recently hit the headlines when Marcin Oleksy became the first amputee FIFA Puskas award winner. Amputee footballer Marcin Oleksy saw off competition from Tottenham Hotspur's Richarlison and Marseille's Dimitri Payet to win the FIFA Puskas Award for best goal in February this year.

**About Gordon Mackay**

* With a footballer father and GP mother, Prof Mackay grew up steeped in the worlds of sport and medicine. He returned to medicine following injury in his own fledging playing career, inspired to innovate in the world of sports medicine. Today he is a specialist sports surgeon caring for top sportsmen and women including Olympians.
* Professor Mackay’s invention of the InternalBrace, with the support of Arthrex, has revolutionized the treatment of damaged ligaments and tendons. It has transformed post-operative care, often halving the recovery time back to work or sport. The technique was voted one of the most innovative and relevant developments in the field of sports surgery and is now used in over 30 countries around the world. www.mackayclinic.co.uk