

**SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE**  
**Saturday, 24th April, 1976**



# **Celtic v Ayr United**

**Kick-off 3 p.m.**

**OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 10p**



# CELTIC CELEBRATE THE UNFURLING WITH A WIN

IT SEEMS a long time ago now, but Ayr United were the visitors to Celtic Park on September 30, 1972.

Before anyone asks what the special significance of that day was—I'll tell you.

It was the day that Celtic unfurled their specially designed flag bearing the number "7" to denote the achievement of winning the Scottish League Championship for a record seven successive seasons.

## GREAT DELIGHT

Despite a slight technical hitch when the flag was being unfurled, it eventually fluttered majestically in the breeze to the great delight of the big Celtic crowd.

With the preliminaries over, the two teams appeared to contest the two league points at stake and both squads have changed quite dramatically in the meantime.

The teams on that occasion were

**Celtic:** Williams; McGrain and McCluskey; Murdoch, McNeill and Callaghan; Johnstone and Dalglish; Deans; Macari and Hood. Sub: Quinn.

**Ayr United:** Stewart; Filippi and Murphy; Fleming, Rogerson and McCulloch; Doyle and Graham; Ingram; McLean and Stevenson. Sub: McGovern.

The referee for the match was Mr T. Marshall of Glasgow.

The fans were still on top of the world and singing their praises of the "seven-in-a-row" unfurling when Celtic shot into an early lead.

Tommy Callaghan, who had been giving the right side of the Ayr defence problems with his long running attacks down the left wing, was the man who made the opening for the goal.

After galloping down the wing on one of many such raids, he crossed a perfect ball into the goalmouth and Dixie Deans was waiting to head the ball well out of keeper Stewart's reach.

It was a first-class goal, one fit to win any match, and as it happened that's exactly what it turned out to be.

Because, in spite of almost constant Celtic pressure, the home side couldn't find another way past the Ayr defence.

Criticism for not adding to the single-goal lead had to be directed against the forwards who were presented with all sorts of scoring openings and squandered them all.

## TOP OF THE TABLE

Following one opening made by Lou Macari, a hesitancy by Jimmy Johnstone to stick the ball into the net allowed the goalkeeper to clear the ball off his toes.

Jimmy's miss wasn't the only one by any manner of means, because with the midfield men so much on top, the Celtic forwards were 'parked' in the Ayr half of the field—but despite all the outfield superiority they couldn't add to that solitary early goal.

The win put Celtic joint top of the league with Aberdeen with five games played.

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# SIR ROBERT HAD ANSWERS TO DECISION CONTROVERSY



TO WIN a Scottish League championship a team MUST be successful at home. Consistently successful, Celtic haven't done so, and the point which was lost to Aberdeen at Parkhead last week is a prime example of what has been happening this season.

Ironically, the club has the BEST AWAY RECORD in the Premier Division, and that merely increases the frustration when contemplating the Celtic Park match statistics.

The point Aberdeen gathered last Saturday was the eighth to get away from Parkhead. Rangers, Hibernian and Dundee each took one, Motherwell a couple and the Dons THREE!

A couple of weeks back, with nine league wins in a row registered (including six shut-outs) it looked as if we'd managed to achieve the essential consistency for the crucial run-in to the title.

Dundee United and Aberdeen altered the picture, yet despite losing our place at the top of the table, this Premier Division has been so full of the unexpected that the championship might not be climaxed until the last match!

A lot of people have earmarked Monday's match with Rangers as the "decider". Our old rivals have stayed in championship contention because they've done their stuff at home . . . dropping only three points up until last Saturday, against our eight, and that cancelled out our better away figures.

The situation is perfectly clear for Celtic players. They'll have to make doubly sure of taking every goal chance — and every half-chance — that comes along.

**For it would seem that field situations with a shade of doubt that leads to controversy are not going to go Celtic's way.**

When decisions went against the club in a tension-tight and crucial time like the present run-in for the Premier League title, the late Sir Robert Kelly used to say: "The only answer is to stick the ball in your opponents' net as often as possible. There is no other way."

Celtic haven't done that, though the players cannot be faulted for lack of attacking effort in all matches.

The breaks in football should even themselves out over a season. That is probably true in a numerical sense. But the importance of the ones that you don't get can be so damaging to a club's chances of success that the tight decisions which go your way hardly matter.

Nevertheless, disappointment must be shrugged off and concentration applied to winning . . . and winning well. For this Premier League race isn't over yet.

## CELTIC



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Thomas L. Devlin  
James M. Farrell,  
M.A., LL.B.

Kevia Kelly

Manager:

John Stein, C.B.E.

Address:

Celtic Park,  
95 Kerrydale Street,  
Glasgow, G40 3RE

HONOURS:

League Champions (29 times)

1893, 1894, 1896,  
1898, 1905, 1906,  
1907, 1908, 1909,  
1910, 1914, 1915,  
1916, 1917, 1919,  
1922, 1926, 1936,  
1938, 1954, 1966,  
1967, 1968, 1969,  
1970, 1971, 1972,  
1973, 1974.

Cup Winners (24 times)

1892, 1899, 1900,  
1904, 1907, 1908,  
1911, 1912, 1914,  
1923, 1925, 1927,  
1934, 1933, 1937,  
1951, 1954, 1965,  
1967, 1969, 1971  
1972, 1974, 1975.

League Cup Winners (8 times)

1957, 1958, 1966,  
1967, 1968, 1969,  
1970, 1975.

Empire Exhibition Cup  
1938

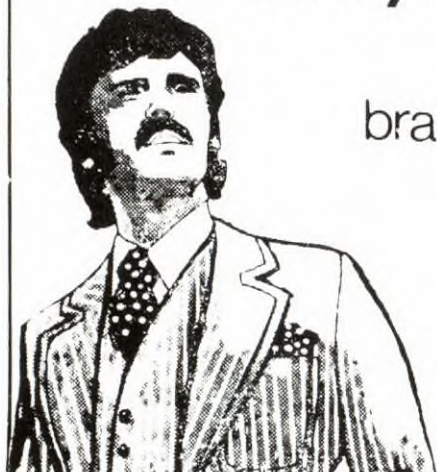
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# UNITED HAVE DONE WELL SINCE ALEX MOVED HOUSE TO AYR

AYR UNITED manager Alex Stuart got himself and his family "settled into a permanent home" six weeks ago. He's not a man given over to wearing "lucky" fedoras or long, flowing cloaks, but he makes the point that the Somerset team has done "extremely well" since he moved into his new house.

"Perhaps it is because I have got the family organised and there is a feeling of permanency that has allowed me to concentrate even more on the management of Ayr. Whatever the reason, we went five games in a row without defeat as soon as we moved into our new home."

Ayr came close to making it six against Rangers last week, but it'll be hard work and not luck about the hoose that manager Stuart will rely upon to keep the part-time Somerset club on an improving path.

It was tough going in the early days of his appointment five months back. Then he had to maintain a teaching appointment in Dundee and commute between Tayside and Ayr. There was, too, the business of house-hunting, fixing schooling for the family.

That behind him, he concentrated on status-retaining for Ayr in the Premier League.

"It is a division with a high mortality rate, two clubs relegated from ten each season, but because of its dimensions, it will always be a tough one for all teams, apart perhaps from Celtic and Rangers, who have greater resources than the rest," he observes.

He envisages Ayr having a "good system" operating next season, ideas that he feels will allow the part-timers to hold their own.

Celtic and Rangers, he admits, will always be hard to beat. But tilts with them are instructive. "It is a chance to find our capabilities, to prove ourselves."

Alex Stuart is highly complimentary about the efforts of his players in recent weeks, despite injury problems.

Central defender Alex McAnespie has been out of action for the league side for nine



**DAVE WELLS**

still in hospital, and won't play again this season

weeks; his deputy Billy Paton has just had a plaster removed following a leg hurt; and David Wells (jaw fracture) is still in hospital and won't play again this season.

Young Bobby Tait, who was called upon for the centre-half job with McAnespie and Paton not available, "was the best man on the park at Ibrox last week," says Stuart. "I'm very pleased with him. He's doing a great job for the club, and with that sort of spirit the team will do alright."

Of course, the manager has made a couple of shrewd purchases since he arrived at Somerset. Within weeks he had Malcolm Robertson signed from Raith Rovers, and Ayrshire fans appreciate the swift skills of the left-winger.

Gordon Cramond he brought from St Johnstone. "He's doing a special job for the team in midfield . . . and doing it well," says the Ayr boss.

Having got himself "settled down" and Ayr showing a great survival spirit, the prospects of the club are brightening, and in the new Premier League season the part-timers of Somerset aim to make a bigger than ever impact.



# TODAY'S VISITORS

## AYR ON TARGET TO STAY IN TOP DIVISION

BEFORE going down to Rangers at Ibrox last Saturday, the Ayr United squad of manager Alex Stuart had taken nine points from their previous five games . . . and achieved to large extent the target of the boss who took over five months ago.

After a highly successful management spell at Montrose, the basic aim of Alex Stuart at Somerset since November has been retaining United's place in the Premier League.

Ayr are not completely clear of the tensions of the relegation area, but in recent weeks the position has improved considerably.

His aim of "buying time" to get through the present situation is obviously working as manager and players forge a new link and understanding. And the squad's eagerness to try out the more expansive ideas of manager Stuart next term (in the Premier League, of course) is understandable.

So they come to Celtic Park today in pretty good shape, despite having injury problems in recent weeks, and having lost ten goals to the Parkhead squad in two Premier matches this term.

"Only one match concerns us now . . . that's today's," says manager Stuart. "What happened in November and December last year is over and has no bearing on how we will tackle this afternoon's match."

Manager Stuart likes to play



HUGH SPROAT

the Old Firm. "They are a measuring stick for other teams. How we do against Celtic and Rangers tells us of our capabilities and how we are doing."

He thought they should have had "something out of the game at Ibrox last week". Points-wise that is. Which gives a fair clue to the current attitude of the part-time club. They have a new note of confidence about them.

Celtic, as usual, will respect their opponents, who will line up their eleven from this player pool:

**Hugh Sproat.** Called up in 1975 from the Junior Auchinleck Talbot, he made an immediate impact to secure his place in the league side and has developed into one of the best young keepers in the Premier Division.

**Danny McDonald.** Another product of the Ayrshire Junior field, joining from



JOHN MURPHY

Muirkirk in 1973. Formerly a midfielder or centre-back player, the 22-year-old is now a regular in the full-back position. He's not a giant (5' 7") but he's good in the air and tackles with strength and precision. Lost his place to Davie Wells early this year, but when his colleague suffered a broken jaw recently, slipped naturally into the Somerset defensive set-up.

**John Murphy.** One of the personalities of Scottish football, he is Ayr's longest-serving player having signed in 1963. His old club Darvel play in this afternoon's Scottish Junior Cup final. However, it will be Ayr's performance on which he will concentrate his considerable experience and expertise today. Though a part-time player he maintains a remarkable degree of fitness and seldom misses a game. Relies on skill rather than strength in his defence role, and while his

hairline might be receding, is not yet at an age to consider retirement from a game he obviously relishes to the full.

**Rikki Fleming.** Partners Bobby Tait in a two-man "barrier" which opposition strike forces find hard to penetrate. A former Rangers player, he joined Ayr in 1968 and has proved a splendid signing. Effective in the air.

**Bobby Tait.** With Alex McAnespie and then Billy Paton becoming casualties, Ayr turned to Tait for the centre-half role. He has linked well with the more experienced Fleming at the centre of the defence.

**Joe Filippi.** Had a spell as a young player with Coventry City before returning to sign for his hometown side. Has played at full-back, but is currently operating from mid-field . . . and effectively, too.

**Johnny Graham.** The club captain who had experience with Hibernian and Falkirk before reaching Somerset.

Constructs with skill and can take goals as well as make 'em. An expert from the penalty spot.

**Davie McCulloch.** An other midfield man who can exert great influence on the United play. Small in stature, he compensates for his lack of height and weight with play prompting of perception and subtlety.

**Gordon Cramond.** United's latest signing from St Johnstone. A tenacious, all-action player, he has fitted into the Somerset midline and played his part in the recent good run. Was a Montrose player when Alex Stuart managed the club.

**Malcolm Robertson.** Manager Stuart's first signing after joining Ayr. He tried to sign Robertson from Raith Rovers when he was boss at Montrose, and when he learned that English clubs were interested he moved fast to bring Robertson to Somerset. The fast, aggressive left-

winger has already proved a first-rate buy, maintaining the scoring touch he had with Raith.

**Alex Ingram.** Joined Ayr from Queen's Park, and then returned to Somerset after a year in English football with Notts Forest. Particularly effective in the air, he can out-jump tall defences. Doesn't miss many chances on the ground either, and his strong running is a constant threat to defences.

**Jim McSherry.** Freed by Kilmarnock, he became an Ayr player at the beginning of the season and has been a real find as a player on the right flank.

**Gerry Phillips.** Having recovered from an appendicitis operation, bids to get a regular place again in the Somerset attack. Signed last season from Cumnock Juniors, he had made a number of league side appearances when illness struck.

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# TODAY'S TEAMS

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 PAT McCLUSKEY  
 ROY AITKEN  
 JOHANNES EDVALDSSON  
 JOHNNY DOYLE  
 KENNY DALGLISH  
 DIXIE DEANS  
 RONNIE GLAVIN X  
 BOBBY LENNOX 12  
 PAUL WILSON X  
 TOMMY BURNS  
 GEORGE McCLUSKEY 13  
 ANDY RITCHIE

F  
 A. M  
 L  
 D. S.  
 J. C.



Spectators  
 take care—  
 the ground

# HALF-TIME S

<b>A</b>	ABERDEEN HIBERNIAN		<b>E</b>	AIRDRIE HAMILTON	
<b>B</b>	DUNDEE UNITED RANGERS		<b>F</b>	ST MIRREN MORTON	
<b>C</b>	HEARTS ST JOHNSTONE		<b>G</b>	FALKIRK DUMBARTON	
<b>D</b>	MOTHERWELL DUNDEE		<b>H</b>	EAST FIFE CLYDEBANK	

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 (Paisley)



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 after the match

**AYR UNITED (From)**  
**HUGH SPROAT**  
**DANNY McDONALD**  
**JOHN MURPHY**  
**RIKKI FLEMING**  
**BOBBY TAIT**  
**JOE FILIPPI**  
**JOHNNY GRAHAM**  
**GORDON CRAMOND**  
**JIM McSHERRY**  
**ALEX INGRAM**  
**MALCOLM ROBERTSON**  
**DAVE McCULLOCH**  
**GERRY PHILLIPS**

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## SIDELINES

### Guest of Honour

Danny McGrain is the guest of honour at the Celtic Supporters' Association Rally in Kelvin Hall on Sunday night. The programme will have a prompt start, and the presentation to the player will be earlier in the proceedings than usual. For Danny and his team-mates have a Parkhead fixture with Rangers 24 hours later.

### Under-18s meet

Another Celtic-Manchester United match has been arranged. As well as the meeting of the league sides in the Jimmy Johnstone/Bobby Lennox testimonial match on May 17, the Under-18 squads of the clubs play at Parkhead on Friday, May 14. Old Trafford boss Tommy Docherty reckons he has one of the best Under-18 sides in England, and this match presents the Parkhead young 'uns with an excellent opportunity of showing their skills.

### Ayr History

Ayr United were founded in 1910, and have been champions of the Second Division six times. The Somerset scoring record is held by Jimmy Smith, with 66 goals in the Second Division in season 1927-28.

### Six-in-a-row

Kenny Dalglish's goal against Aberdeen was his 29th in competitive games this season. He has scored in Celtic's last six games.

Next Home Game  
PREMIER LEAGUE

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v  
RANGERS

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