

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE
Wednesday, 9th March, 1977



Celtic v Partick Thistle

KICK-OFF 7.30 p.m.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 10p

ROY'S FIRST GOAL THRILLED FIRHILL

CELTIC are playing Thistle tonight in a league match postponed from October of last year.

Strangely enough, as every fan of both clubs knows, this evening's game now becomes the third meeting of the two clubs in just over three weeks.

In the first of these meetings, at Celtic Park on Saturday February 12, Thistle were without skipper Alan Hansen who missed the game because of suspension. Celtic won the game by 2-0 and the goalscorers were Ronnie Glavin and Kenny Dalglish.

Ten days later the two teams met again, at Firhill this time, and the Maryhill Stadium lived up to its reputation for providing thrills.

Celtic raced to a 3-0 interval lead and then scored a fourth shortly after the start of the second half. Then two Celtic errors allowed Thistle to reduce the deficit to two goals and suddenly the game was alive again. However, despite some hectic Thistle pressure Celtic stood firm and regained their composure to take both points in a 4-2 victory.

One of the highlights of the game was the goal scored by Roy Aitken to give Celtic a 3-0 lead just before half-time. It was Roy's first goal for Celtic and it's worth recounting for anyone who missed the game. The young mid-field player was given the ball just outside his own penalty box. He side-stepped two Thistle players and passed the ball forward to Joe Craig. Joe held the ball and then placed a perfect ball in front of Roy as he burst through the centre of the field.

Without faltering, Roy took the ball forward in stride and then from fully 35 yards he lashed a terrific shot high over the advancing goalkeeper into the back of the net.

Looking further back we find a see-saw match between the teams at Celtic Park on November 9, 1963. The teams on that occasion were:-

CELTIC: Haffey; Young and Gemmell; Clark, Cushley and Kennedy; Johnstone and Murdoch; Chalmers; Divers and Hughes.

PARTICK THISTLE: Niven; Hogan and Tinney; Cross, Harvey and Cunningham; Cowan and Yard; Hailey; Duffy and McParland.

Steve Chalmers opened the scoring for Celtic in the 18th minute when he ran on to a Johnny Divers pass and placed the ball past the advancing George Niven.

Three minutes later Bobby Murdoch hit the bar and Jimmy Johnstone was lying handy to flick the re-bound into the net.

Thistle then rocked Celtic with three goals in five minutes from Ian Cowan (2) and Billy Hailey to go into the lead.

In the second half Celtic pushed Thistle back on their heels and it was no surprise when Steve Chalmers scored the equaliser after 67 minutes.

John Hughes put Celtic ahead once more four minutes later and then with just three minutes left for play Steve Chalmers completed his hat-trick to put the result beyond doubt.

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NOW LET'S GET BACK ON THE WINNING WAY



THE week-end defeat at Aberdeen merely serves to underline what I have been saying for some weeks. . . the Premier League championship hasn't been won yet!

Indeed, the people who were shouting the odds about it being easy for Celts are now the ones who are upset and flustered about the loss of two points at Pittodrie!

They are lacking in a basic quality that makes for championship winning by a team . . . consistency. If Celtic had to fluctuate in its results as wildly as they fluctuate in their opinions and feelings . . . not so many prizes would be secured, I can tell you.

The Aberdeen situation isn't a critical set-back. It was disappointing to lose. We're always slightly down when points slip away. Particularly when we didn't play well. And that was the case at Pittodrie.

Sure the weather was difficult. But the gale had to be met by Aberdeen as well as ourselves. So we cannot claim it was specially difficult for us.

Meeting Partick Thistle at Celtic Park tonight provides quick opportunity to pick up things again in the drive for the championship. We have to regard the Aberdeen result as a slight interruption in our consistent run. Up to the Pittodrie fixture 27 points had been won out of 28 . . . and we are still in a good position.

Nevertheless, 100 per cent effort is still the requirement for the title. No matches are easy. Some are tougher than others and you can be sure that manager Bertie Auld and his Partick Thistle side will be out to make it as hard as possible for us tonight. For they require points to retain Premier League status.

Celts have won the last two games with them, but in this ever-surprising Premier League set-up that doesn't automatically ensure a third victory. That will have to be worked for.

There are no heads down at Parkhead after Aberdeen. The reverse. We're keen to extend the lead at the top to the further possible extent.

When the points totals show that we cannot be caught then I'll join with the chorus that Celts are champions. Until then . . . no over-optimistic forecasts, please.

Alfie Conn makes his Parkhead debut tonight. Give a warm welcome and plenty of encouragement. It'll take a little time to settle down.

JOCK STEIN

CELTIC



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

Kevin Kelly

Manager:

John Stein, C.B.E.

Address:

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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,
1931, 1933, 1937,
1951, 1954, 1965,
1967, 1969, 1971
1972, 1974, 1975.

League Cup Winners (8 times)

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

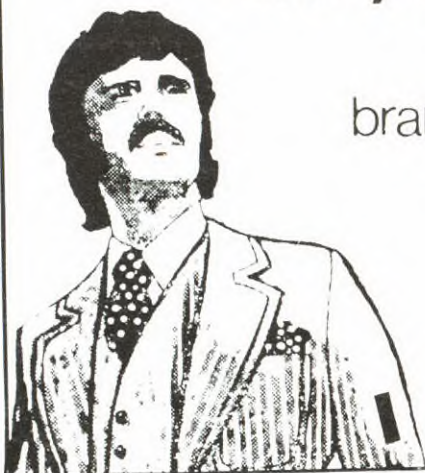
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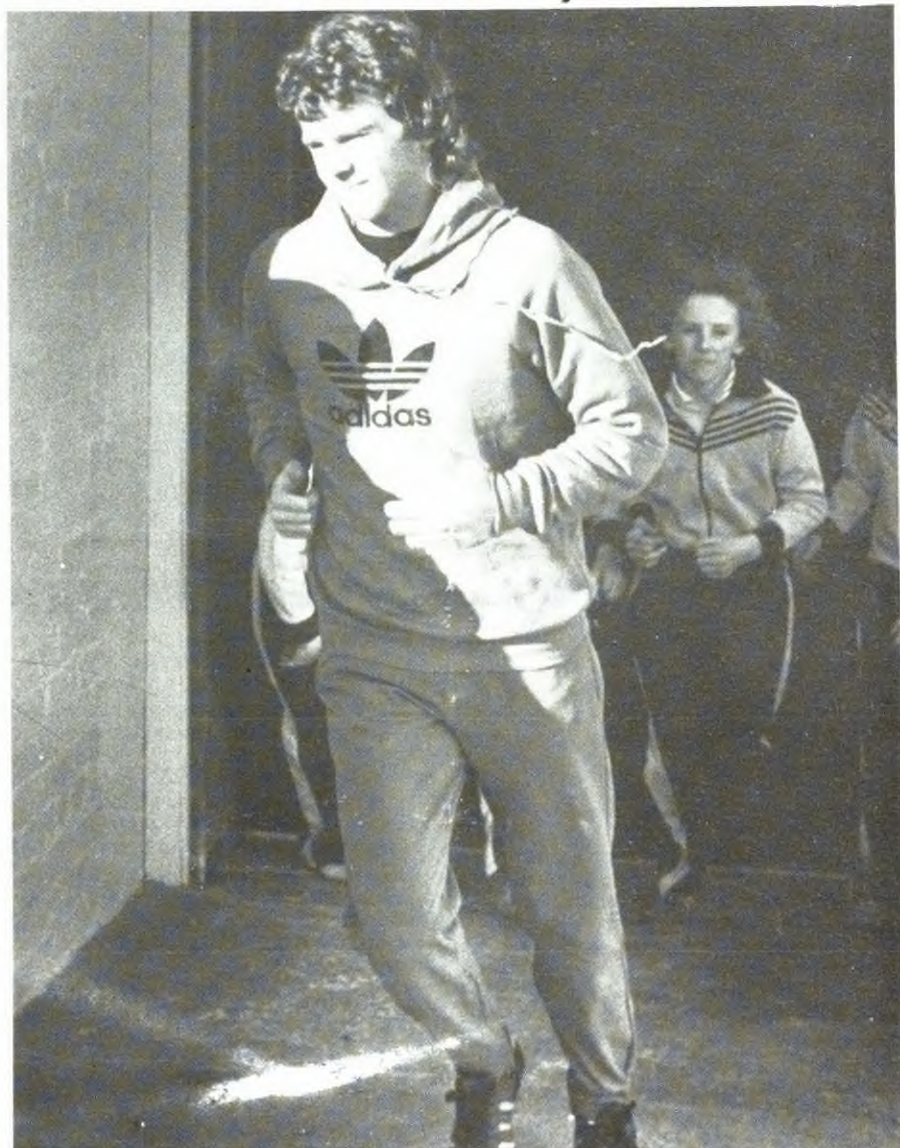


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WELCOME BACK TO SCOTLAND, ALFIE



Out of the shadows and into the sunshine of regular football comes Alfie Conn. The latest Celtic signing got his first taste of the Scottish game again at Aberdeen on Saturday as a substitute. Tonight, in his Parkhead debut, he lines up from the kick-off.

TODAY'S VISITORS

JAGS FEEL THEY CAN CAUSE UPSET

IT IS just three-and-a-half weeks since Partick Thistle and Celtic played their first-ever Premier League match at Parkhead. Now they are making up for lost time, or rather fixture delays caused by the devilish winter weather.

Tonight manager Bertie Auld brings his team to Celtic for third meeting of the 1976-77 season, the teams having met at Firhill two weeks back.

Celtic made it 2-0 at home and 4-2 away, but is that depressing Bertie Auld as he contemplates tonight's game? No, sir.

"We're in good shape after winning against Kilmarnock on Saturday. I was very pleased over the way the Thistle players went about their business then.

"We lost a soft goal, but the boys showed a bit of character. Heads didn't droop. They simply got their game together until such time as the goals came for us."

Manager Auld says "Thistle have the ability to command more points, and we've got to keep on doing it against any opposition".

Reflecting on the 2-0 defeat last time at Celtic Park the Firhill boss says: "It was close enough when you consider it was an own goal that brought them into the game. In the game at Firhill we proved that whenever we go at Celtic we can do something. Although we were four down we scored two and had them rocking in the latter stages of the match.

"You can take it as certain that we will have a go in tonight's game and if my players show the same spirit and control as in Saturday's match we'll get something out of the fixture tonight.

Manager Auld however will have a special warning for his players tonight. He explained: "Celtic lost at Aberdeen on Saturday and you have to watch out in these circumstances. They will be out to redeem themselves, especially on their own ground.

"We will have to be at our best and not lose concentration. We lost a silly goal against them at Firhill when one or two professionals turned their back on a free kick. They've been through that situation since then."

Can Thistle do an Aberdeen? "As I say if we don't lose concentration and the players exhibit the same determination as against Killie we could upset things.

"It is always hard against Celtic, of course. We know they will come at us and as they do they will leave gaps. We will try and exploit the gaps when they show."

Manager Auld has continued the field shrewdness he showed as a player with Celtic into the not so easy business of football management. He's been able to sell well and buy reasonably.

But the most rewarding part of management for him has been the promotion of young players from the reserves to the league side.

"It is a great pleasure to sign a boy, see him come through the reserves and mature sufficiently to go into the big team... aye, even in this difficult Premier League.

"Look at players like Brian Whittaker and Jimmy Melrose for instance. They have come into the side and not cost the club anything."

His blend of youth and experienced practitioners manager Auld expects to maintain a place in the Premier League this time and advance the club's cause to greater degree next term.

"We've learned a lot in our first go at this set-up. There is continual pressure, but the players are finding how to handle it. Next season this experience will stand them in good stead."

Firhill followers who believe in the somewhat doubtful "science" of numerology feel that third time can be lucky for Jags tonight. Bertie Auld puts his faith in the ability of his team and his own motivation methods.

His opposite number Jock Stein doesn't

expect it to be easy. "That's right," says Bertie Auld. "We need the points as much as Celts and we'll fight for them right to the finish."



ALAN ROUGH



JOHN HANSEN

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TONIGHT'S TEAM

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ANDY LYNCH
PAT STANTON
JOHANNES EDVALDSSON
ROY AITKEN
JOHNNY DOYLE
RONNIE GLAVIN
JOE CRAIG
KENNY DALGLISH
ALFIE CONN

PAUL WILSON
PAT McCLUSKEY
JOHNNY GIBSON

R
Mr B.
(
L
Mr
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Mr W.

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JACKIE CAMPBELL
JOHN MARR
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SIDELINES

COME EARLY FOR SUNDAY'S CUP TIE

A build up of traffic close to kick-off time meant a lot of fans missed the kick-off at the Sunday game with Ayr United (February 27). To avoid such a disappointment in the Scottish Cup tie with Queen of the South this Sunday Celtic supporters are urged to get to the stadium a little earlier than usual and "escape" the congestion that can occur in the 10 minutes or so before the 3 p.m. start.

... AND DON'T FORGET EARLY IBROX START

Here's another reminder for Celtic fans. The match with Rangers at Ibrox on MARCH 19 KICKS OFF AT 1 p.m.

BIG RODDY IS ON THE MEND

Roddy McDonald did not turn out in tonight's game. The Celtic centre half is being given every opportunity to make a complete recovery from his recent leg knock.

Twice he has had to retire from matches recently when the injury troubled him. Now Celts aim to have him 100 per cent ready before his next recall. Certainly the presence of the big Highlander will be welcomed in the run in for the League championship and the Scottish Cup.

PREMIER PLACINGS

Celtic	23	16	3	4	36
Rangers	24	12	5	7	31
Aberdeen	23	11	4	8	30
Dundee United	23	12	5	6	30
Hibernian	24	5	5	14	24
Partick Thistle	24	6	10	8	20
Hearts	25	5	11	9	19
Motherwell	21	6	9	6	18
Ayr United	24	6	14	4	16
Kilmarnock	25	3	16	6	12

(Dundee United v Rangers not included)



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