

# CELTIC

## v FALKIRK



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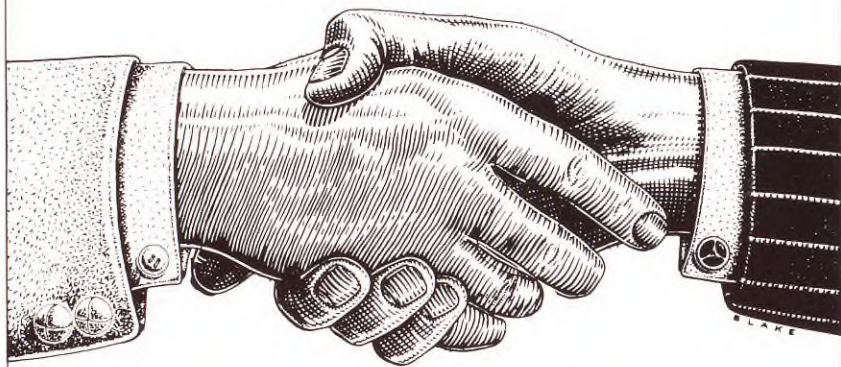
**Saturday March 5th, 1988  
Celtic Park, Glasgow  
Kick-off 3.00pm**



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## CELTIC v FALKIRK

# Around the League

news . . . views . . . facts . . . dates . . .

Programme edited  
by Kevin McKenna



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Roddy Stewart  
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### It was a funny old day last Saturday in the Premier League.

There were Celts struggling to a rock-bottom performance against rock-bottom Morton and yet still managing to pull a further point clear of Rangers in the race for the title. The Ibrox men travelled to Tayside to face Dundee United in a game they knew they had to avoid losing to keep their faint championship chances alive. United traditionally fare badly against Rangers but last Saturday they were unlucky not to have taken both points. Paatalainen had given them the lead just before half time. Then Mark Walters proved his ability once again to equalise with magnificent hook-shot. But the Dundee side should have sewn it up when they missed two great chances to score in the last five minutes. But they won't be too displeased at having managed to take four points from the Ibrox men this season.

But hats off to Morton. They hadn't won a match in their last 22 and had seen their three Danish imports disappear back across the North Sea to Scandinavia after a short but effective time at Cappielow where they managed to shore up Morton's leaky defence. In addition to this Morton came to Glasgow in the knowledge that they had

been comprehensively defeated by Celtic in their previous three Premier League encounters this season. But what a fight they made of it. I doubt if even Celtic fans would have begrudged them a point.

Keeper David Wylie showed just why Andy Roxburgh is looking at him closely. And their back four never put a foot wrong for the entire game. I almost felt sorry for some of the Morton fans in the stand as they saw the chance to celebrate for a change, slip quietly away.

Falkirk look as though they are poised for another great escape. Any more results like their 2-0 win over Hearts last Saturday and Motherwell and St Mirren will be sweating. It was a disastrous result for the Edinburgh club and rubbed salt into the gaping wound left by the John Robertson wrangle.

Hibs continued their consistent run with a solid 2-0 win over Dunfermline. It was ex-Celt George McCluskey who hit the glory trail making one and scoring a great second. Hibs have now only lost two of their last 13 matches — both against Celtic — and now they are looking very threatening in the mini race for a UEFA Cup slot with both Dundee sides. And they will have been boosted by the news that John Collins has decided to



George McCluskey

tie himself to the club for another while at least.

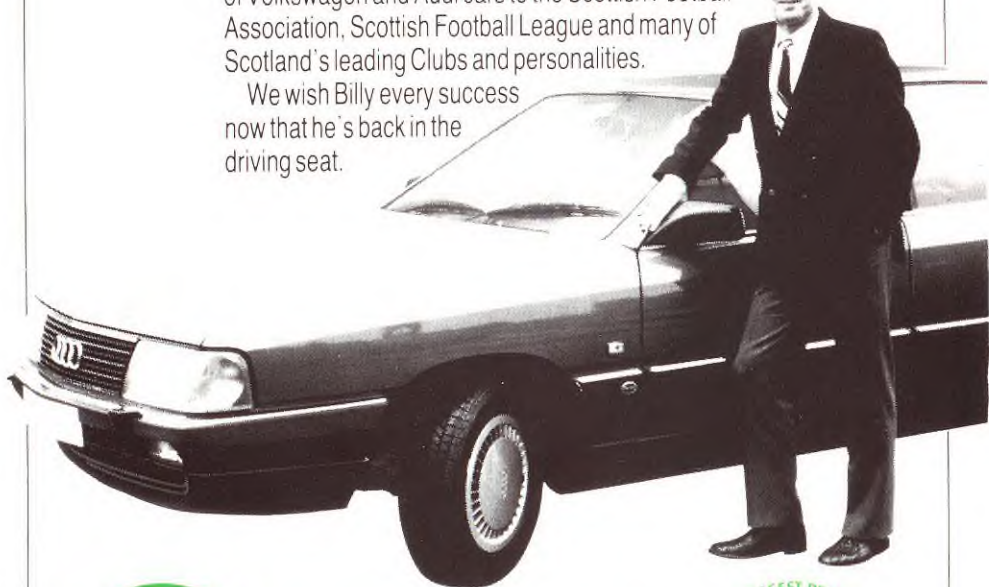
Motherwell and St Mirren's 0-0 draw will have satisfied both clubs; Motherwell because it's a precious point gained to keep alive their hopes of avoiding the drop and St Mirren because it halted a recent dismal sequence of defeats.

Davie Dodds, the bravest centre forward in the league gave Aberdeen the points in a dour 1-0 victory over Dundee. And Tommy Coyne re-discovered his goal touch to score both of Dundee's goals in the 2-1 win over St Mirren at Dens on Tuesday night. Now Tommy is a good bet for the Golden Boot award.

# Back In The Driving Seat With a Great Team.

When Billy McNeill came back to Scotland, it was inevitable he would sign for the No 1 team, Ian Skelly. As Britain's biggest, the Ian Skelly Group are suppliers of Volkswagen and Audi cars to the Scottish Football Association, Scottish Football League and many of Scotland's leading Clubs and personalities.

We wish Billy every success now that he's back in the driving seat.



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## CELTIC v FALKIRK

# Billy McNeill

*the manager has his say*



**IN the last seven days Celtic have shown that they can win games while they are not playing well and that they can also win matches with style.**

The former was the case when they played Morton at Celtic Park last Saturday. They took the points in a most unsatisfactory manner, possibly they suffered a backlash from the two gruelling Hibs Cup ties.

It has to be pointed out that after working so hard at psyching themselves up for the Easter Road replay, it was difficult for the players to be re-motivated for the match against Morton without intending any disrespect to the Greenock side. The match became a bit flat for us and the same could be said for our performance.

Perhaps the best thing that can be said about the game was that we grabbed both points, even if it did take a Roy Aitken penalty in the last minute.

But to be fair, the team are always going to encounter games like this when it becomes obvious long before the end that they are playing without inspiration. The players though, never stop battling away and I think that our win was deserved in the end.

It is to their credit that having taken criticism, they bounced back just 4 days later to deliver a quite stunning performance against Dunfermline at East End Park. Against the Fife side, they showed just how well they can play. Some of the football they produced was quite magnificent. The players showed they can encompass all that is good about Celtic — fast football was the accent on attacking, skilful play.

I am also pleased to report that there were no injuries from either match and that I have a full squad to choose from for this afternoon's game against Falkirk.

I took off Andy Walker against Dunfermline because he was slightly tired, not having played for a while, but his outing in Fife was like a week's training and he showed that he hasn't lost his ability to snap up opportunities around goal.

Billy Stark came off near the end simply because I wanted to give Tommy Burns a piece of the action.

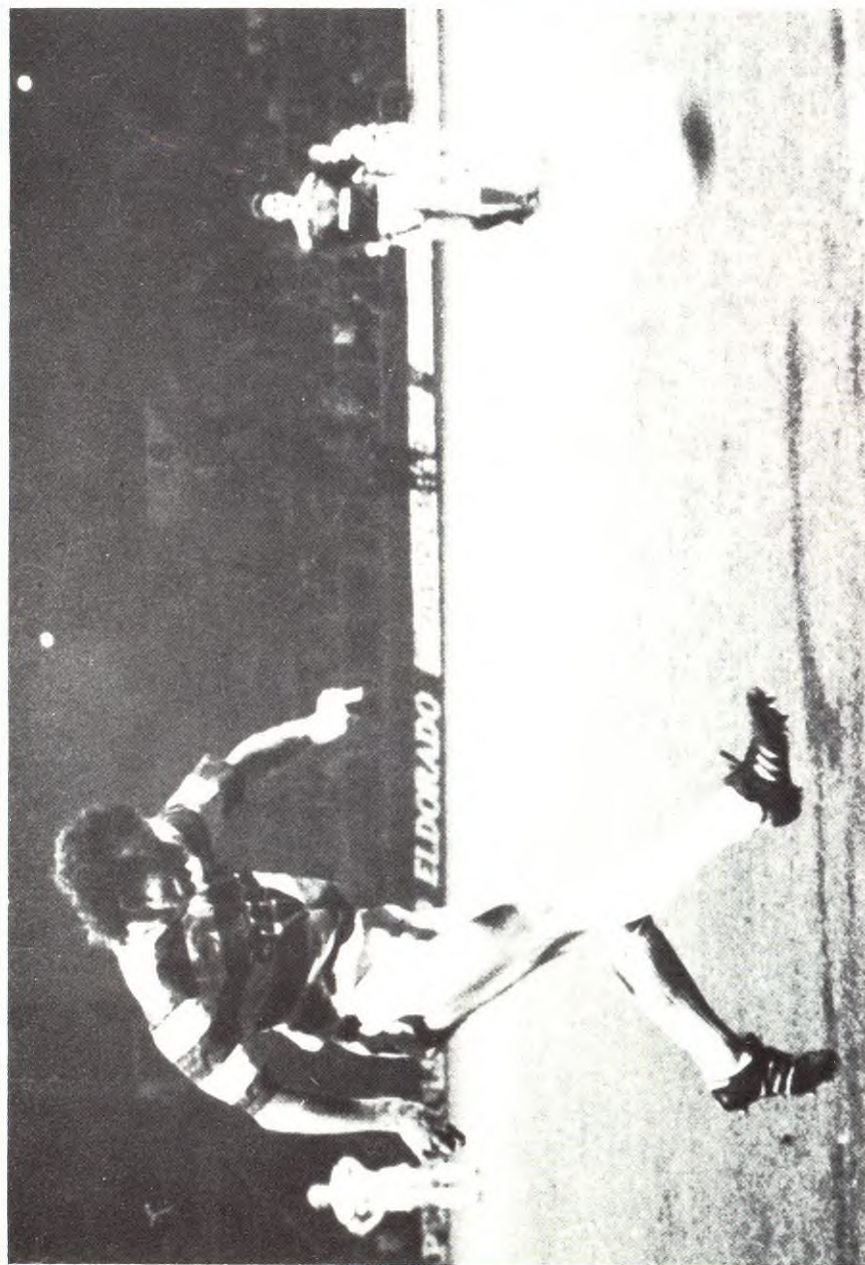


We couldn't find ourselves in finer fettle for the Falkirk game, but in saying that I am well aware that Falkirk have been putting together some fine results recently, not least of which was a great 2-0 win over Hearts last week. They are a very determined outfit who have made us work very hard for our wins against them this season.

I don't expect this afternoon to be any different, for while we are engaged in a battle to lift the Premier League title, Falkirk are involved in their own little league at the bottom of the table. The prize for the winners of this contest will retain their Premier League status. So Falkirk have as much incentive to win as ourselves. It should be a great game.



## CELTIC v FALKIRK



*Billy Stark hopes this afternoon to repeat this scene. He is pictured (above) netting the first of an important double against Falkirk at Celtic Park in October.*





## CELTIC v FALKIRK

BILLY Stark's late winner against Hibs last week was his 11th goal of the season. And its doubtful if he'll score a more important one in the remainder of the year — unless, of course, it happens to be at Hampden Park on May 14th.

The only person who doesn't seem surprised at the big midfielder's success with Celtic is his boss, Billy McNeill who has often rued the fact that he didn't sign him five years earlier.

And its not hard to see why McNeill thinks like this. Stark epitomises the model professional — rarely flustered on the park and with a private life that has always remained the sole concern of himself and his family.

Indeed Stark at 31 and almost half-way through a two-year contract with Celtic, is a good bet for another few years. He has kept himself relatively free from serious injury in a career that has seen him at Paisley with St. Mirren, Aberdeen and now Glasgow.

He admits that he hopes to be around for another few years: "I am happier at Celtic Park than I ever have been at previous residences," he said. "Here the footballing philosophy is an attractive and wholesome one and happily co-incides with the way I like to see this game being played," he explained.

"And playing in front of so many fans who passionately want you to succeed is a great experience. I'm glad to be playing in Glasgow — this is truly a football city."

Stark has always prided himself in getting into forward positions to grab goals and during his spell with Aberdeen he was often second top



*Stark in action v Hibs this season.*

scorer, eclipsed only by the goal-scoring prowess of Frank McDougall. Last season he finished as the Pittodrie side's top scorer.

The most telling aspect of the midfielder's game is his deceptiveness. He is faster than most people give him credit for and for such a tall player has a fair degree of close control which has seen him wriggle free of many a congested midfield. And of course he appears in places in the opposing penalty area where he is least expected, if the looks on defenders faces are anything to go by.

And before anyone can do anything about his unwelcome presence, the ball is usually in the back of the net. Says Stark: "I don't worry so much if I haven't scored during a game. When I do start to fret is when I have played 90 minutes without having had the opportunity to take up a threatening position. Each time I take the field I aim to get my name on the score-sheet."

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## What the papers say...

**THE league meeting with Morton was very nearly a stumbling block for Celtic's championship hopes. It was one of those games when supporters had that awful feeling that even if the goals were 100 yards wide and high we still wouldn't score.**

This was due mainly to the fact that goalkeeper Wylie was in superb form. **Chick Young** of the **PEOPLE** gave his summing up of the game: "Celtic tightened their grip on the title race after getting through by the skin of their teeth. They stole the points off Morton with a dramatic last minute penalty after producing their most disappointing league performance of the season."

**Jack McQueen** of **THE OBSERVER** took a calmer look at the match to start his quote: "If Celtic looked more purposeful forcing a succession of corners, they proved unable to breach the Greenock defence until that penalty in the final minute which brought immense relief to 23,000 frustrated watchers."

The penalty was of course a very tense moment and the pressure on the one to take it would be immense. **Alan Herron** of the

**SUNDAY MAIL** felt the drama of the scene: "Decision Time — who takes the kick? Skipper Roy Aitken didn't hesitate. He grabbed the ball, spotted it and drove it low into the net. A possible weekend of agony for manager McNeill was thus averted with the only direct shot Celtic had on target all day."

The **SUNDAY MIRROR** reporter saw the significance of the score: "It was a vital goal for the championship favourites particularly since key rivals Rangers and Hearts both lost ground in the chase for the crown."

For their match report, the **SUNDAY POST** had, as a guest writer, new boxing star **Stevie Boyle**, who said: "Celtic set themselves up for a quick K.O. then proceeded to fall over their boot-laces in a bid to land the killer punch."

Stevie was asked for his men of the match and his reply showed that he is a man of taste: "The Parkhead fans — with a support like this behind me I'd soon be world champion."

Congratulations on your win Steve, and hopefully the next time you're at Celtic Park you'll be a champion watching champions.

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## CELTIC v FALKIRK

# Looking Back . . .

**5 YEARS AGO · MARCH 5th · PREMIER LEAGUE · ATT: 8,500  
MORTON 0, CELTIC 3**

CELTIC kept hard on league leaders Aberdeen's tails with this fine 3-0 victory at Cappielow. A two goal burst in five first half minutes saw off the Morton challenge.

In nine minutes Sullivan shot cleanly home from 12 yards following good work by McGarvey. Five minutes later MacLeod scored no. 2. Celts eased off somewhat in the second half but McCluskey scored a third one minute from the end.

CELTIC: Bonner, McGrain, Sinclair, Aitken, McAdam, Sullivan, McCluskey, McSlay, Nicholas, MacLeod, McGarvey.

**10 YEARS AGO · MARCH 4th 1978 · PREMIER LEAGUE · ATT: 12,700  
DUNDEE UNITED 0, CELTIC 1**

CELTIC stopped a disastrous sequence of recent results with this hard-fought victory at Tannadice. It was Celtic's first league win since December 24th.

It was a terrible game and it was obvious that something out of the ordinary would break the deadlock. United supplied it with a Dave Narey own goal in 69 minutes that was enough to give Celts the points.

CELTIC: Latchford, Sneddon, Dowie, Munro, McDonald, Aitken, McCluskey, Edvaldsson, Craig, Burns, McAdam.

**15 YEARS AGO · MARCH 3rd · SCOTTISH 1st DIV. · ATT: 38,000  
CELTIC 2, ABERDEEN 0**

CELTIC faced Aberdeen knowing that no slips could be permitted. They were already trailing Rangers by three points, although with the benefit of two games in hand. They completely overwhelmed Aberdeen who defended as though their lives depended on it. And it took Celtic until the 62nd minute to break the deadlock. Lennox converted with a penalty and 20 minutes later Dalglish scored to put a more realistic look on the scoreline.

CELTIC: Hunter, McGrain, Quinn, Murdoch, McNeill, Connolly, Johnstone, Dalglish, Deans, Hood, Lennox.

## This time last year . . .

**CELTIC .....3 MOTHERWELL .....1**

ON a snow-covered Celtic Park, the Bhoys, with 5 changes in the line-up after the Dundee disaster the week before, recovered slightly to pick up the 2 points.

It only took 6 minutes for the new look Celts to take the lead when Roy Aitken headed home. In the 20th minute Steve Kirk equalised for the visitors direct from a free-kick but only 2 minutes later ex-Celt Tom McAdam deflected a Brian McClair cross into his own goal.

The points were sealed in the 72nd minute when Owen Archdeacon crossed from the left and Tony Shepherd cleverly first-timed the ball into the back of the net.

### It's a fact

This is Falkirk's fourth to Celtic Park on Premier League duty and on each of the other 3 occasions they have managed to score 2 goals. This record is only equalled by Hamilton Accies who have scored 4 goals in their 2 visits here.

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