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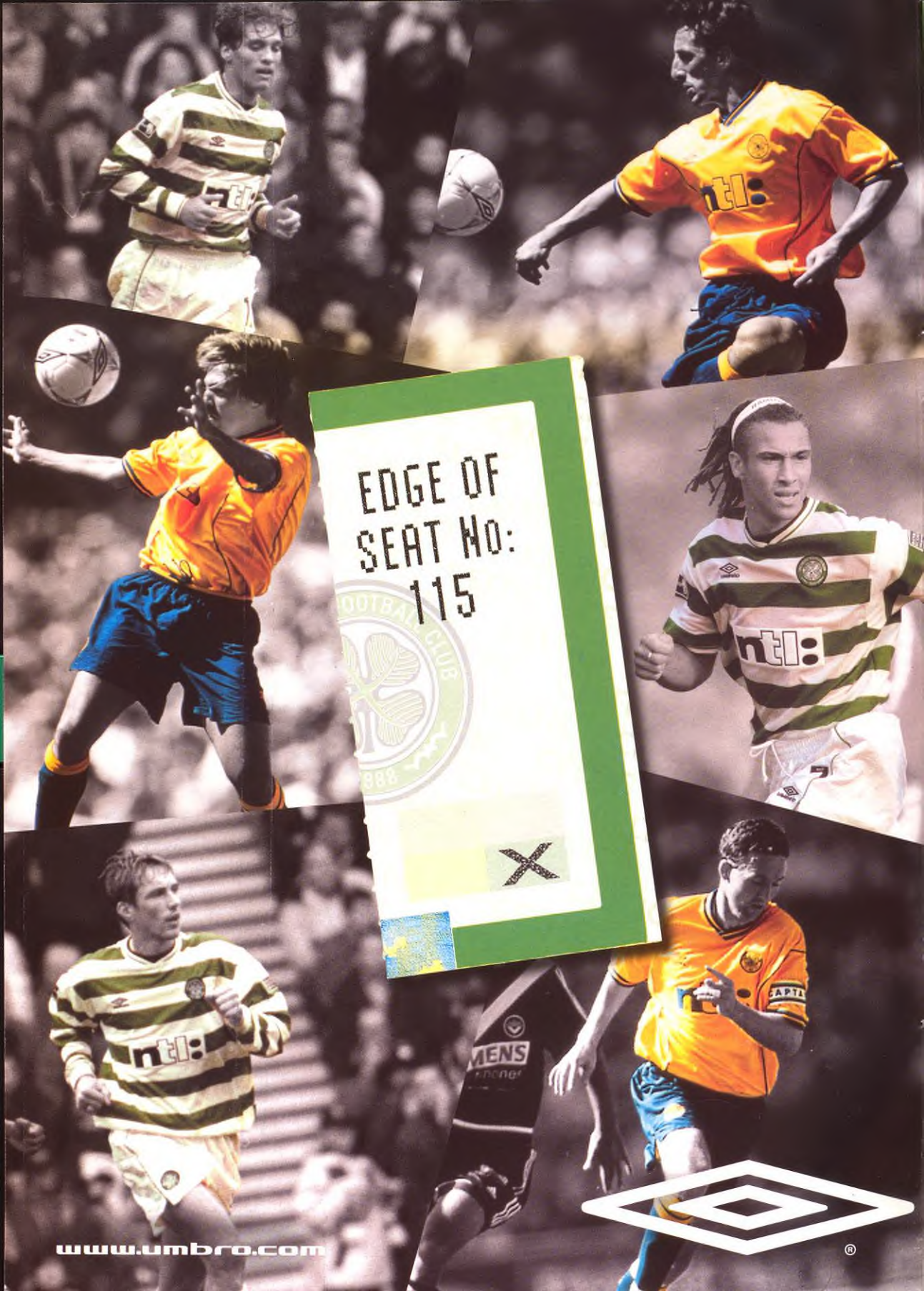
CELTIC PARK

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2000

KICK-OFF 3.00PM



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DUE to Christmas printing deadlines, I have been asked to pen these notes a little earlier than normal.

Indeed, I'm writing so far ahead of the game today I don't even know the outcome of last Saturday's match against St Mirren or our Boxing Day meeting with Dundee United!

However, there is one thing I can tell you for certain: both matches will have been extremely difficult for us.

The winter break is only a few days away yet, with important games still to play today and against Kilmarnock on Tuesday, there has been no respite.

Today's opponents Motherwell have already provided us with two desperately close matches this season.

Our first encounter here at Celtic Park in August, also our opening home fixture of the season, saw us reduced to nine players after Chris Sutton and Jackie McNamara had incurred the wrath of the referee, who had earlier sent off John Davies.

However, we held out in a frantic finish to win 1-0.

Our second meeting at Fir Park was in complete contrast: a thrilling encounter which ended 3-3 with both sides contributing to an extraordinary 90 minutes.

Considering the circumstances, Billy Davies has done exceptionally well this season and he and his players will feel the fine form they showed last season is steadily returning.

In our last home game against Aberdeen, I thought we played very well indeed for long periods, and a late flurry of goals was no more than we deserved.

Our final goal against Ebbe Skovdahl's team was our 79th in competitive football this season and the 19th we have scored in our last four matches at Celtic Park, so I doubt if there will be too many complaints about the entertainment value.

However, I may well be wrong there as well!

That match saw Swiss defender Ramon Vega make his debut for the club and also witnessed Neil Lennon's first outing at Celtic Park.

The two new boys have been made very welcome by the supporters and their team-mates, and it was certainly



KID CLASS: Young Jamie Smith impressed in the last home game

Bringing in winter break with a storm

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a startling debut for big Ramon, who scored once in each half to cap an overall performance which was very steady indeed.

Henrik Larsson was, once again, in great goalscoring form and it is testament to his ability that, even when he has supposedly been performing "below par" this term, he has still managed to net 26 times in as many matches.

Afterwards, a number of people were rightly paying tribute to his stunning third goal, but personally I thought the pick of the bunch was our first, with Alan Thompson playing a magnificent ball through to Bobby Petta, who pushed it across for Henrik to beautifully side-foot it home.

I also felt it was the most important strike because it settled us down and allowed our game to flow.

A word also for young Jamie Smith, who was only on for the last 10 minutes but still managed to take his goal exceptionally well.

With the likes of Jamie, Colin Healy and Stephen Craigne all in and around the first team, it augurs well for the youngsters coming through.

All three lads have shown their worth to the senior squad and, barring injuries, they will all travel with us to Florida during the winter break.

But more about that on Tuesday...

In the meantime, enjoy the game.



Johnathan

● Printing deadlines meant that all the material for today's programme had to be completed on Tuesday, December 19. Thus details relating to the away games against St Mirren and Dundee United either side of Christmas could not be included.

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celtic:
probable formation 3-5-2

motherwell:
probable formation 4-4-2



subs	celtic	motherwell

Referee: JOHN ROWBOTHAM

Assistant Referees: ROSS McCLUSKIE

ROBERT JOHNSTON

Fourth Official: STEVE CONROY

celtic squad

- 1 Jonathan GOULD
- 2 Tom BOYD (captain)
- 3 Stephane MAHE
- 4 Jackie McNAMARA
- 5 Joos VALGAEREN
- 6 Alan STUBBS
- 7 Henrik LARSSON
- 8 Alan THOMPSON
- 9 Chris SUTTON
- 10 Eyal BERKOVIC
- 11 Morten WIEGHORST
- 12 Tommy JOHNSON
- 14 Paul LAMBERT
- 15 Bobby PETTA
- 16 Olivier TEBILY
- 17 Didier AGATHE
- 18 Neil LENNON
- 19 Stilian PETROV
- 20 Rab DOUGLAS

- 21 Stewart KERR
- 22 Stephane BONNES
- 23 Dimitre KHARINE
- 24 Colin HEALY
- 25 Lubomir MORAVCIK
- 26 Paul SHIELDS (on loan)
- 27 Mark BURCHILL (on loan)
- 30 Vidar RISETH (on loan)
- 31 Rafael SCHEIDT (on loan)
- 32 Simon LYNCH
- 33 John CONVERY
- 34 Mark FOTHERINGHAM
- 35 Johan MJALLBY
- 36 Ramon VEGA
- 37 Liam KEOGH
- 38 Barry John CORR
- 39 Jamie SMITH
- 40 Stephen CRAINEY
- 41 John KENNEDY

motherwell squad

- 1 Andy GORAM
- 2 Marlyn CORRIGAN
- 3 Stephen McMILLAN
- 4 Benito KEMBLE
- 5 Ged BRANNAN
- 6 Greg STRONG
- 7 John SPENCER
- 8 John DAVIES
- 9 Lee McCULLOCH
- 10 Don GOODMAN
- 11 Stephen NICHOLAS
- 12 Derek ADAMS
- 14 Kevin TWADDLE
- 15 Tony THOMAS
- 16 Steven WOODS
- 17 Stephen WOODS
- 18 Derek TOWNSLEY
- 19 Stuart ELLIOTT
- 20 Dougie RAMSAY

- 21 Paul HARVEY
- 22 Keith LASLEY
- 23 Ange OUEFIO
- 24 Martin WOOD
- 25 John CONNOLLY
- 26 Colin MILLER
- 27 James McFADDEN
- 28 Brian DEMPSIE
- 29 David CLARKE
- 30 Scott WILSON
- 31 Kevin MacDONALD
- 32 John FALLON
- 34 Andrew BELL
- 35 Shaun FAGAN
- 36 William KINNIBURGH
- 37 John CRAWLEY
- 38 Barry TULLOCH

HAVING played for a number of teams in my career, perhaps it's only natural to look back with great affection at a couple of clubs I enjoyed immensely.

My first team, Motherwell, gave me a great grounding in the game and all the early habits I learned about putting maximum effort into training every day from great professionals like John Gahagan were to stand me in good stead throughout my career as a player.

I couldn't imagine what it would be like to play against Celtic at that time but in the Scottish Cup semi-final of 1985, I was to find out how tough it actually was! I was named as a substitute for Motherwell in what was easily the most important game of my short career there.

Andy Harrow and Rab Stewart were chosen as Motherwell's front two - much to my disgust! - and it came as a huge shock to me when I was called into action five minutes before half-time! Rab had played with a tight hamstring and, when he couldn't continue, I was suddenly playing against all my heroes.

I don't think I was nervous before the game but stepping on to the pitch was a completely different experience and my first involvement was to go in for a 50-50 challenge with Danny McGrain. Needless to say Danny won it but I felt I was now part of the action and my nerves disappeared.

Moments later the ball went out of play and, in trying to get my breath back, I was suddenly aware of a warm sensation on my leg. A gap of about an inch just below my kneecap had appeared but, with the adrenaline still pumping through my body, I hadn't noticed Danny had left his calling card!

As much as I tried to convince the doctor that I could play on, he was having none of it and my first outing against Celtic had lasted only five minutes!

Winning promotion to the Premier Division

I was Well served by first footing

ANDY WALKER on the net gains of finding the target against both Motherwell and Celtic

In my first season enabled me to realise my first ambition of playing against Celtic on a more regular basis and, in a couple of those games, I managed to put the ball past Pat Bonner, a fact I'm never slow to remind him of if he gets too cheeky!

In a Skol Cup semi-final at Hampden, I can remember coming on with Celtic leading 2-0, and scoring one of my favourite goals. I still remind big Packie of it every time I see him! Brian Wright played a pass into the box that resulted in a straight chase for the ball between Mr Bonner and me.

It was a very wet evening and I sold Packie the most outrageous dummy which saw him almost slide out of the area, and all that was left was for me to do then was put the ball into an empty net.

That brought us back into the game and

another goal from Paul Smith took the game into extra time.

Celtic had plenty of experienced players but, when there was no further scoring in the extra half-hour, I really believed we would go through in the penalty shoot-out.

I volunteered to take one, of course, and Packie was nowhere as I sent him the wrong way.

Out of 10 penalties, John Philliben was the only one to miss - he crashed his against the bar - and Celtic went through to play Rangers in the final. Nevertheless, the experience of playing at Hampden in such a big occasion was fantastic and it's a game I'll never forget.

As so often happens, though, the Motherwell fans were unforgiving when I signed for Celtic a couple of years later and, in the early part of the season, I had to return to Fir Park in the hoops to play against my former team-mates.

My opening re-match at Parkhead had gone particularly well as I had scored two in a 4-1 win. The opener was my first goal at Parkhead and it was one I'll never forget.

Mark McGhee pressurised my good friend Fraser Wishart into





DOUBLED UP: Andy Walker takes on the Well defence during a 4-1 win in 1997



making a hurried pass. The ball broke to Tommy Burns, he crossed and I launched myself at it to score what was, for me, a most unlikely header.

Mark McGhee and Billy Stark were the other goalscorers at a time when I was lucky to be surrounded by such experienced players.

My return to Fir Park was for a night game under floodlights and the atmosphere was terrific. The reception I got from the Motherwell fans was extra-ordinary. At the beginning of the second half, I walked over to the section opposite the tunnel to take up

my starting position and the abuse I took was vicious and obscene.

The fact I had scored in the first half didn't help but my only reaction was to smile and puff my chest out even further in pride. Celtic won 2-0.

In one of those strange quirks that football throws up, I scored regularly against my first club. My record against them was certainly a lot better than the Motherwell fans had hoped for!

I like to see Motherwell doing well but, when they're playing Celtic, there can only be one winner for me: the Hoops have got to come out on top.



April 13, 1985

Scottish Cup, semi-final, Hampden
MOTHERWELL 1

McAllister 12

CELTIC 1

Burns 23

MOTHERWELL: Gardiner; McLeod, Forbes, Boyd, Murray; Doyle, McAllister, Mauchlen, Blair; Stewart (Walker, Gahagan), Harrow.

CELTIC: Bonner; McGrain, Aitken, O'Leary, Reid (McAdam); MacLeod, McStay (McGarvey), Burns; Provan, Johnston, McClair.

ATT: 30,536

September 23, 1986

Skol Cup, semi-final, Hampden

CELTIC 2

McClair, Aitken

MOTHERWELL 2

Walker 70, Smith 88

Celtic won 5-4 on penalties

CELTIC: Bonner; W McStay, Aitken, Whyte, McGrain (Shepherd); MacLeod, McStay, Burns, Archdeacon (McInally); Johnston, McClair.

MOTHERWELL: Gardiner; Wishart, Philliben, Kennedy, Murray; Farningham, Kirk (Gahagan), Wright, Boyd; Reilly (Walker), Smith.

ATT: 26,541

August 15, 1987

Premier Division

CELTIC 4

McGhee 31, Walker 36, 82, Stark 78

MOTHERWELL 1

Kirk 73

CELTIC: Bonner; Morris, McGugan, Whyte, Rogan; Stark, Aitken, McStay, Burns; McGhee, Walker.

Subs: Shepherd, McGuire.

MOTHERWELL: Duncan; Wishart, Paterson, McAdam, Murray; Boyd, Russell, Kirk, Mair (Wright); Fairlie, Smith. Sub: Farningham.

ATT: 24,478

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NET PROFIT: Jackie McNamara slots his goal in the 3-3 draw with Motherwell earlier this term

Jack in the box puts Celts Well into lead

In the 3-3 draw at Fir Park earlier in the season, Johan Mjallby, Joos Valgaeren and Jackie McNamara became the 65th, 66th and 67th players to score for Celtic against Motherwell in the Premier Division/SPL.

In the same game Lee McCulloch became the 51st player to score for Motherwell against Celtic in the Premier Division/SPL. His second-half header was also Motherwell's 50th Premier Division/SPL goal against Celtic at Fir Park.

Ged Brannan's penalty in the above match was his fourth Premier League goal against Celtic. He is now joint fourth in Motherwell's list of top Premier scorers against Celtic alongside Vic Davidson and behind Tommy Coyne (5), Stevie Kirk (7) and Dougie Arnott (8).

Celtic's top Premier scorers against Motherwell are Brian McClair (11) and Paul McStay (10). No prizes for guessing the top current Celt: Henrik Larsson, of course, with six.

Only once in the last eight league meetings between Celtic and Motherwell at Celtic Park, have both teams found the net. That was on April 18, 1998 when Celtic won three crucial points on their way to the title. Steve McMillan opened the scoring for the visitors in the 14th minute, but doubles from Craig Burley (25 and 43) and Simon Donnelly (50 and 63) gave the Hoops a 4-1 win.

On three occasions Celtic have completed a grand slam of four league victories over Motherwell in one season. They were in 1985/86, 1987/88 and 1998/99.

Last season Motherwell got the better of Celtic in the four league meetings for the first time since 1994/95, by winning two, losing one and drawing the other.

Since the start of the Premier Division in 1975/76, Celtic do not have a great record in the last match of a calendar year. In 25 games they have won just 12, drawn six and lost seven. Of the 25 that were at home they have emerged victorious in nine, drawn three and lost three.

The last time Celtic ended a year with a home match against Motherwell was on December 26, 1964. Big John 'Yogi' Hughes, wearing his training shoes, scored both goals in a 2-0 win in front of just 9,500 spectators.

DAVID McDONALD