

PHIL O'DONNELL TRIBUTE MATCH



CELTIC v MOTHERWELL
THE LEGENDS



SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2008, CELTIC PARK, KO 2.00PM

PRICE £3

Phil O'Donnell

1972 - 2007

'a man among boys, in every sense of the word'



PHOENIX

PHIL O'DONNELL TRIBUTE MATCH



WELCOME

TODAY the legends of Celtic and Motherwell face each other in a Tribute Match for Phil O'Donnell. They represent great triumphs for their respective clubs - Motherwell's 1991 Scottish Cup win and Celtic's 1998 Championship success - and these players are rightly held in high esteem by supporters.

Phil O'Donnell was an integral part of both of those squads. As a teenager, he scored his first senior goal in the 4-3 victory over Dundee United at Hampden which helped take the Scottish Cup back to Fir Park. He moved to Celtic in 1994, and helped the Hoops win their first title for 10 years in 1998.

This Tribute Match will be an emotional occasion. Players who enjoyed Phil's company as a team-mate and a friend will gather together, happy to renew acquaintances while at the same time aware of the sad event that has brought about this reunion.

Motherwell have now lost two of the players who won the 1991 Scottish Cup, with both Phil O'Donnell and Davie Cooper having passed away in similar, unexpected and tragic circumstances. Our thoughts are with their loved ones at this time.

There is also added poignancy, given the recent death of Tommy Burns. He brought Phil to Celtic in 1994, having identified a player who could play football 'the Celtic way' and he did go on to contribute to a great Celtic success.

The tributes which poured in from all over Scotland and beyond after Phil O'Donnell's sad and untimely death on December 29, 2007 are a testament to him as a player and

as a man. Supporters mourned the loss of someone who had always given of his best on the field of play, while those fortunate enough to have known him remembered him as a good friend, a decent man and someone absolutely devoted to his family.

The game today, and this special commemorative programme, remembers Phil and celebrates his life as a footballer. He achieved so much in the game and it is right that Celtic and Motherwell supporters gather today to pay tribute to him. It is a day to say thanks for the memories.



The organising committee would like to thank the following for their help in today's event.
Nike for supplying the Celtic kit
SNS for the use of photography in the programme and promotional material

PHIL O'DONNELL TRIBUTE MATCH





THE MOTHERWELL YEARS

1990-94

APPEARANCES

League

123 appearances + 1 as substitute
15 goals

League Cup

6 appearances

Scottish Cup

11 appearances + 1 as substitute
2 goals

Europe

3 appearances

TOTAL

143 appearances + 2 as substitute
23 goals

PHIL O'DONNELL TRIBUTE MATCH



HAMPDEN ROAR

Tom Boyd remembers the teenage team-mate who scored one of the goals that won the Scottish Cup for Motherwell in 1991





WORDS: DAVID FRIEL

DAVIE COOPER floated a free-kick to the back post as Dundee United retreated deep into their box. Players from both sides challenged for the ball as it broke into the centre of the area.

With boots flailing, United looked ready to avert the danger until a flash of claret and amber flew through the air. Within an instant, the ball was in the net and Motherwell were on their way to Scottish Cup glory.

It was May, 1991. Phil O'Donnell was just 19. He was the baby of the side and was expected to follow the lead of the vastly-experienced members of the Motherwell side. Instead, he led by example with the vital second goal in the epic 4-3 win.

"For someone so young, it was an incredible performance from Phil," said Tom Boyd, who captained that Motherwell side and also played with O'Donnell at Celtic.

"Not many people of that age get the chance to play in cup finals with a club like Motherwell, but Phil did and he took it in his stride.

"Young players could get over-excited but Phil just played his normal game and scored one of the best, and most important, goals in Motherwell's history.

"That was a decent team and Phil played his part. We had a good run, beating Aberdeen away and Celtic in a replay. As a squad, we had ability and it was a good mix between youth and experience."

Experience came from the likes of Cooper, while O'Donnell was a relative infant. Prior to that Hampden clash, he had never played in a cup final or even scored a goal for Motherwell.

Yet, as he crashed that brave header into the corner - injuring himself in the process - Boyd wasn't surprised in

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the least. He knew from the first day of training with him that O'Donnell had something special.

"He was just a quiet lad when he came in at first," smiled Boyd. "That was just his nature, but he was the type of person who listened very well and was never any problem for the coaches.

"Phil got his head down, worked hard and did as well as he could for the club. I always thought he had a real



chance in the game and that's the way it turned out.

"He liked to get beyond the midfielders into the box and was great at timing his runs. You could tell that from the moment he first started training with us, and he was a fit lad as well.

"Everyone could tell he had all the attributes to play in

that role and he did it well, although ironically his debut was as a left-back.

"However, we all knew that his best position was as an attacking midfielder and that's where Phil did his best work for Motherwell - most notably in the 1991 Scottish Cup final.

"It will be great for the boys of that team to get back together for this game. Tragically, we've lost two fantastic men in Phil and Davie Cooper, so it will be an emotional occasion."

PHIL O'DONNELL TRIBUTE MATCH



ALL ROADS LEAD TO HAMPDEN

In 1991 Motherwell made it all the way to the Scottish Cup final, making it a season no supporter would ever forget

Third round

Aberdeen 0-1 Motherwell (Kirk)

Little did Motherwell and their fans suspect that their trip to Pittodrie on January 26, 1991 was the start of a historic cup run. Aberdeen were the Scottish Cup holders and wasted no time in asserting their superiority, with Ally Maxwell and his defenders giving a stoic performance to keep the scoresheet blank, while future Fir Park manager Alex McLeish had a goal ruled offside for the hosts. Motherwell finally progressed thanks to the birth of the 'Super Sub' tradition which propelled them all the way to eventual victory at Hampden. Manager Tommy McLean introduced Stevie Kirk in place of Iain Ferguson just as Davie Cooper was preparing to take a free-kick - and the substitute promptly ignored the instruction to "use your height at the back post". Cooper rolled the ball straight to Kirk and, after just 18 seconds on the pitch, he netted the winner with his first touch by sending a left-foot shot screaming into Theo Snelders' net.

Fourth round

Motherwell 4 Falkirk 2 (Cusack 2, McLeod, Kirk)

This was to be the first of three occasions in the cup run when Motherwell netted four goals, but the match against the runaway First Division leaders was a far closer affair than the scoreline might suggest. Nick Cusack opened the scoring before a Fir Park crowd of 10,000, but Falkirk were back on level terms by the interval thanks to Sammy McGivern. The sides traded goals again in the second half - Joe McLeod picked the perfect time to score the first of his only two goals for Motherwell, but it was again cancelled out by Alex Taylor. With just eight minutes remaining, though, it was time for the latest intervention of Super Sub - Kirk this time scored with his second touch, rolling home from Cusack's header, and the provider then turned scorer by netting his second of the game late on.

Quarter-final

Motherwell 0-0 Morton

Another First Division side, Morton, provided an equally tough challenge in this quarter-final tie at Fir Park. Neither side was able to find the net during the tense 90 minutes, with the hosts' best efforts coming from Dougie Arnott, whose shot following a Phil O'Donnell run was tipped round the post by goalkeeper David Wylie, and from Iain Ferguson, who blasted off target in the closing stages.

Quarter-final replay

Morton 1-1 Motherwell 1 (aet) Motherwell won 5-4 on penalties

Motherwell headed to Greenock three days later with both sides knowing that a Hampden semi-final date against Celtic was the prize for the winners. Tom Boyd opened the scoring with a rare goal. As happens so often in football, however, the visitors were undone by one of their own former players - John Gahagan, who had just left Fir Park after a decade in claret and amber, fired home the rebound after a save from Maxwell. His equaliser took the game into extra-time, and ultimately, penalties. The score stood at 4-3 to Motherwell after a Morton miss, leaving cult hero Colin 'Psycho' O'Neill to step up for the decisive spot kick. In typically understated style, he almost ripped the net with his effort and celebrated with his trademark somersault.

Semi-final

Motherwell 0-0 Celtic

Neither side really managed to impose themselves during their Hampden meeting, with Motherwell fans in particular wondering if their long-awaited chance of a final appearance had been lost after failing to seize their opportunity of an Old Firm upset. The Fir Parkers defended stoically, with John Collins having a shot blocked and Maxwell making an impressive late save; but Motherwell fans felt their side were denied a penalty and wondered if they would be left to rue a Ferguson shot which hit the woodwork.



WORDS: **JUDITH TONER**

Semi-final replay
Motherwell 4-2 Celtic

If the first match lacked goals, the replay six days later more than made up for that shortcoming. Motherwell made the worst possible start, though, with Elliot putting the ball in the net in the first minute, only for the goal to be disallowed, followed by Boyd netting an own goal after a penalty-box scramble just a minute later. Dougie Arnott equalised for Motherwell, but it was 2-1 to the Hoops at the interval after Anton Rogan fired into the corner of the net. However, Motherwell were transformed after the interval, Arnott beginning the remarkable fightback by heading home a Luc Nijholt cross. The scores remained level until 15 minutes from time when O'Neill seized his chance of glory and put Motherwell in front for the first time with a thunderous 40-yard rocket which screamed into Pat Bonner's net and was last year voted Motherwell supporters' favourite goal of all time. Kirk kept up his tradition of scoring in every round by curling an effort into the top corner.

Scottish Cup final
Motherwell 4-3 Dundee United (aet)

An unforgettable day for all Motherwell supporters, who travelled in vast numbers to Hampden hoping to see their side lift the Scottish Cup for only the second time in their history. Dundee United, led by Jim McLean, brother of Motherwell manager Tommy, provided the opposition for what is still fondly remembered as one of the greatest finals in the history of the famous old tournament. United twice came close and even had a Hamish French goal ruled offside before Ferguson headed Motherwell into a 1-0 interval lead, which gave no hint of the drama which was to unfold after the break. Fir Park goalkeeper Maxwell struggled on after being fracturing two ribs in a collision with John Clark, but Dave Bowman soon took advantage to equalise. Motherwell then re-established his lead as Phil O'Donnell scored his famous 'brave as a lion' diving header, followed by an Ian Angus strike - but then John O'Neil reduced the deficit with a header and then Darren Jackson equalised 20 seconds into injury time. The pulsating final headed into extra-time, and fittingly, it was substitute Kirk who scored the winner, heading home a Cooper corner, with the brave Maxwell later making a stunning save in the closing seconds to ensure that claret and amber ribbons were tied on to the trophy.

