



Celtic

v St Johnstone • Scottish Premiership • Saturday August 26 • 2017 • Celtic Park • KO 3pm • Price £3.50



Position:

Centre back

Height:

1,91 m



#5

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Simunovic



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SOCIAL MISSION STATEMENT

Introduction

Celtic Football Club is legendary and as with most legends as much myth as fact surrounds its history and what the Club stands for today. The Social Mission Statement aims to simply define what the Club stands for and seeks to promote within society.

History

Celtic Football Club was founded in 1888. Its principal founder was a Marist Brother named Walfrid. The Club had two principal aims: The first aim was to raise funds to provide food for the poor of the East End of Glasgow, an area of the City that was greatly impoverished and had a high rate of infant mortality. Within the East End was a large Irish community and friction was growing between the native Glaswegians and the new influx of Irish. Brother Walfrid saw the need for social integration and his vision was a football club that Scottish and Irish, Protestants and Catholics alike could support. A new football club would be a vehicle to bring the communities together and this was the second aim. The Marist brother sought for the Club to have both a Scottish and Irish identity and hence, the Club's name "Celtic" came about, representing a bridge of cultures across the Irish Sea.

Current Positioning of Celtic Football Club

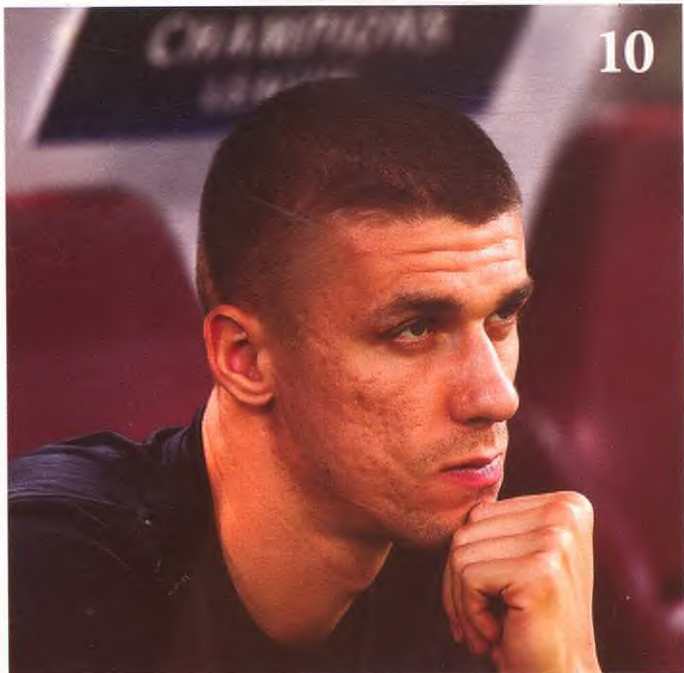
Celtic Football Club is a Scottish football club with proud Irish links. The primary business of Celtic is as a football club. It is run on a professional business basis with no political agenda. However, the Club has a wider role and the responsibility of being a major Scottish social institution promoting health, well-being and social integration.

Who is Celtic Football Club for?

Celtic Football Club is for people who want to support a football club that strives for excellence in Scotland and in Europe, is proud of its history, supportive of its local community and seeks to support the following aims: "To maximise all opportunities to disassociate the Club from sectarianism and bigotry of any kind. To promote Celtic as a Club for all people, regardless of gender, age, religion, race or ability."

Summary

Celtic is a club for everyone who believes in football as a medium for healthy pleasure, entertainment and social integration. The Club always has been and always will simply aim to be the team of the people.



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Manager's Notes...

BRENDAN RODGERS





Euro progress very satisfying but now we're ready for a tough league test

GOOD afternoon and welcome to Celtic Park for today's Premiership game against St Johnstone, and I'd also like to extend that welcome to Tommy Wright, his team and their supporters.

They've made a great start to their league campaign, as have we, and today sees two sides with 100 per cent records this season come up against each other. It promises to be a good game and it's one we're all looking forward to.

We go into the match full of confidence, not only because we have won our opening three Premiership fixtures, but also because we have successfully negotiated the qualifying

'Those special European nights, particularly at this stadium, are something to look forward to in the months ahead'

rounds of the UEFA Champions League and reached the group stages of the competition for a second consecutive season.

It's where we believe Celtic belong, and the prospect of some of Europe's top teams and top players coming to our stadium is something we're all relishing. As I write these notes, we're awaiting the group-stage draw, and we know that, whoever we are drawn against, we will face some very tough fixtures.



However, we are a year on in terms of working together and have the experience of last season's European campaign behind us. We showed then, against some very difficult opponents, that we can compete at this level, and we will do so again this time around.

Those special European nights, particularly at this stadium, are something to look forward to in the months ahead. For now, ahead of the forthcoming international break, our focus is on this afternoon's match against St Johnstone.

Having returned from Kazakhstan, the players have been preparing well for this game. We know that, as always, St Johnstone will be tough opponents. Like us, they've enjoyed a very good start to the season, with three wins out of three, so we know we'll have to be at

our best today in order for us to make it four wins for us.

Once again, your support will be crucial for us. We saw that just 10 days ago in our first leg against FC Astana. The atmosphere was fantastic, and the performance and result on the night were brilliant, giving us a strong lead to take to Kazakhstan.

Today, with three league points at stake, we will be aiming for another strong performance, backed, as always, by a tremendous support.

Brendan Rodgers
Without Fear

VISARO


new balance.

ALWAYS
IN BETA.

□
**DICTATE
THE PLAY**



FURON

□
**DEVASTATE
THE DEFENCE**





A word with our captain...

SCOTT BROWN

The support have played a massive part in our early success this season



WELCOME to this afternoon's game and it seems like so much has happened since I raised the SPFL Premiership title flag at our last home league game here just three weeks ago.

We opened with a win against Hearts, then there was the League Cup tie against Kilmarnock when a very young side skippered by Kieran Tierney in my absence recorded a 5-0 win. There were away wins in the league against Partick Thistle and Kilmarnock and, in amongst all that, we also qualified for the group stages of the UEFA Champions League.

So the mood in the camp is great following our aggregate win over FC Astana. The first leg at Celtic Park was phenomenal for us and the backing from the fans was tremendous in driving us on to the 5-0 win that saw us through despite what must have been an exciting game for neutrals in the away leg in Kazakhstan.

Playing in the UEFA Champions League group stages was always our aim for the early part of the season and

'We have won our first three league games, but so have St Johnstone so we have a real top-of-the-table tussle today as the Saints have been living up to their deserved reputation of finishing high up the table'

the support have played a massive part in that and I'm sure the fans will also be prepared to do their bit this afternoon as we are expecting a tough match today against an on-form St Johnstone side.

As I mentioned before, we have won our first three league games, but so have St Johnstone so we have a real top-of-the-table tussle today as the Saints have been living up to their deserved reputation of finishing high up the table.

We had a good season against them last year but there were difficult games

in there and we expect nothing less from St Johnstone this time around either, especially with their successful start to the season so far.

So I know the Celtic support will spur us on today in our drive to earn another three points and remain at the top of the league.


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Tierney and Forrest delighted with Champions League progress

KIERAN Tierney has already packed in plenty of football since making his first-team debut back in April 2015. He has 19 European appearances to date, which includes UEFA Champions League group-stage football and he will experience that once more this season.

For Tierney, it will represent another step in his education as he gets the opportunity to take on Europe's elite.

"We came through the qualifiers and it's something we should be proud of," Tierney said. "It's a great achievement for the club once again.

"The boys did well against Astana. We came back and scored two late goals, which shows the character we have in such a high-pressure game. We won by four goals over the two legs. We've had tighter ties than that, and we've scored eight goals over two games.

"We switched off defensively in Astana, but that's just one defeat in six European games. People need to focus on that. We could have played better, but we got the job done."

James Forrest is also relishing another Champions League adventure after the Hoops sealed their spot in the group stages in beating Astana 8-4 on aggregate.

"This is where you want to play, you want to play the big games in the



Champions League, whether it's home or away from home," said the winger.

"We came back early and the boys don't take a lot of holidays so we have come back fit and had a good and hard pre-season. It's paid off as our first

objective was to get into the Champions League and we managed to do it, and we are delighted as a squad.

"You are playing against the best teams and players in the world and the fans make it class at Celtic Park."

Young Celts in Scotland Under-21 squad for Netherlands match

CELTIC youngsters Calvin Miller, Anthony Ralston and Mikey Johnston have been included in Scotland's Under-21 squad for the European Under-21 Championship qualifier against The Netherlands.

Miller and Ralston have made further inroads into the first-team this season after featuring last term with Miller earning the Man of the Match award in last Saturday's 2-0 win over Kilmarnock and Ralston making his European bow as Celtic qualified for the Champions

League group stages with an 8-4 aggregate win over Astana.

Johnston also made a memorable debut last term and although injury hampered his pre-season progress, he returned to action this week as the Development Squad kicked off their league campaign with a 4-0 win at Falkirk.

Scotland Under-21s take on The Netherlands in Paisley on Tuesday, September 5 and the game has a 7.30 kick-off.

The young trio take the number of Celts on Scotland duty at the top two levels next week to **NINE** as no fewer than six Celts – Craig Gordon, Kieran Tierney, Stuart Armstrong, Scott Brown, James Forrest and Leigh Griffiths are in the senior squad for the World Cup qualifier double-header against Lithuania and Malta.

The national side travel to Lithuania for the first game which takes place on Friday, September 1, while Malta will visit Hampden on Monday, September 4.

THE BIGGEST STAGE IN THE WORLD

Jozo Simunovic has revelled in his UEFA Champions League experiences so far and he is aiming to enjoy a lot more of them

Exclusive interview: **Tony Connelly**



UEFA
CHAMPIONS
LEAGUE

T HIS time last year Jozo Simunovic was still recovering from a knee injury which resulted in an eight-month lay-off and surgery. Fast forward 12 months and the 23-year-old is in the midst of the best form of his life as he looks ahead to what promises to be a memorable season with the Hoops.

At 21-years-old he signed for Celtic at the end of the 2015 summer transfer window, just as Virgil van Dijk, who had played his last game for the Hoops in a 3-1 league win over St Johnstone, was departing for Southampton.

Arriving from Dinamo Zagreb, who had just won their 10th successive league title and the Croatian side's youth system has yielded many talented players in recent years including Real Madrid's Luka Modric and Liverpool's Dejan Lovren, high expectations were placed upon the young central-defender.

His Celtic debut came that September just a couple of weeks after signing when the Hoops travelled to Amsterdam for their Europa League group stage match against Ajax which ended 2-2, and in January he bagged the first of his two goals, so far, in a Celtic jersey when he headed in a corner in a 4-1 away win over Dundee United in the league.

