

Celtic

V HIBERNIAN

**BELL'S SCOTTISH
LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
SATURDAY, FEB 11
1995. KICK-OFF 3PM.**

INSIDE

**BIG MATCH
ACTION SPECIAL**

Plus++Plus++Plus



**JIM SLAVIN'S
BIG INTERVIEW**



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TOMMY BURNS



I SPENT the early part of this week over in Amsterdam having a good look at Ajax's youth set-up and came home tremendously impressed with the way they go about training young players.

Simply nothing is left to chance and their attention to detail in all aspects of the coaching is phenomenal.

It is so advanced in terms of anything to be found in this country and obviously it was a highly informative trip in terms of the set-up and structure we want to put in place for grooming talented youngsters at this club.

Really, we're about 20 years behind clubs like Ajax in this field but I hope we can learn from the best and in turn make good use of this knowledge.

That's what we intend to do, but this will take years to bear fruit.

We will be placing importance in getting our training facilities - which are presently wholly inadequate - right, as well as bringing in quality players.

Again I would ask supporters to ignore the idle rumour mongering that goes on daily in the papers.

If I have anything to say about signings I'll do it in the *Celtic View*.

Amends

Today's game provides us with the chance to make amends for the disappointment of last Saturday.

Mediocrity is not acceptable at this club but that is what we settled into at Fir Park last week and it was frustrating to lose our 12 match unbeaten league run in such circumstances.

To be fair, our players worked hard but really that should be a pre-requisite of playing for this club.

It is not enough for us to hold our own against opponents, as we did until a highly dubious penalty turned the game.

We must impose our will on them and for that to happen we have to depend on our quality players coming up with something a bit special.

We obviously missed Brian McLaughlin because there was no creativity or sparkle in the middle of the park - elements he could have provided.

I ask supporters to ignore the idle rumours about new signings ;

That perhaps demonstrates what an important player he's become for us after 10 only starts in the first team.

But the midfield we did select contained four men who are all full internationalists.

I think we are entitled to expect more from them than a 90 minutes in which, though they graft away superbly, they do not fashion a single clear-cut chance.



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THE SQUADS



PAT BONNER



TOM BOYD



STUART GRAY



MARK MCNALLY



BRIAN O'NEIL



PETER GRANT



PHIL O'DONNELL



PAUL MCSTAY



PIERRE VAN HOOIJDONK



ANDY WALKER



JOHN COLLINS



BRIAN MCLAUGHLIN



SIMON DONNELLY



Referee:
J Rowbotham
Kirkcaldy



Linesman:
GA Evans
Bishopbriggs



Linesman:
JM McBurney
Dundee

STAND-BYS:
Gordon Marshall(GK),
Jim Slavin, Barry Smith.
Hibs - Chris Reid
(GK), Michael O'Neil, David Farrell



MASCOT:
IAN MCQUADE
AGED 9
DUMBARTON

JIM LEIGHTON



GRAEME MILLER



STEVEN TWEED



GORDON HUNTER



GRAHAM MITCHELL



KEVIN MCALLISTER



DARREN JACKSON



PAT MCGINLAY



BILLY FINDLAY



KEITH WRIGHT



GARETH EVANS



JOE TORTOLANO



KEVIN HARPER



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

CR SMITH



+ TODAY'S VISITORS +



This afternoon Celtic take on Hibernian - a team desperate for European football and rivals for that elusive spot. Alex Miller has built a team over the seasons that is not afraid to play skillful football and keep the ball on the deck. But just who are the danger men for the Edinburgh side? Well ... read on!



★ **STAR STRIKER ...**
Darren Jackson has got himself into the international set-up after a string of fine scoring performances for Hibs.

IF PROOF were ever needed of **JIM LEIGHTON'S** ability then the fact that he is still on the international scene, after all these years, is it.

He has seen and done it all in the game and portrayed a real strength of character after being dropped by Manchester United for a cup final replay.

Many would have packed in the golden game but Jim stuck at it and has found a new lease of life at Easter Road. An inspired buy by Alex Miller.

WILLIE MILLER is one of the country's top young full-backs. Loves to get into the action and is often found belting up the wing to knock teasing crosses into the box.

A tough tackler, he seems to have got control of his sometimes hot-head to become one of the Edinburgh side's most reliable players.

STEVEN TWEED is another of Alex Miller's young defence and he plays a vital part in keeping control at the back with his aerial strength. Tough in the tackle he has given some of the league's top name strikers a very hard time.

GORDON HUNTER was rewarded for his sterling service with the club when Alex Miller gave him the captain's arm band. Has been given the term 'utility player' as he can operate anywhere in the defence or midfield. Has also been known to get his name on the score sheet, usually in very important games.

GRAHAM MITCHELL is coming back after a long lay-off through injury. One of the club's unsung heroes he always gives 100 per cent.

KEVIN McALLISTER may be slight in frame but his blistering pace and fantastic close control have made him a thorn in many a defence. A great signing when he came from Falkirk, Kevin has been tipped for international honours. May have gone off the boil of late and has had to settle for a place on the bench occasionally this season, but he can always turn it on when needed. The Celtic defence will need to be on the ball to stop the flying wing man.

DARREN JACKSON may have surprised many when he left Tannadice for Easter Road but his decision has proved to be the right one. Now one of the country's most prolific strikers he is on the verge of a Scotland call-up and looks likely to play in the forthcoming B international. A hard working striker who is not afraid to drop back and look for the ball.

MICHAEL O'NEILL is the darling of the Hibs fans and a real hot prospect. An attacking midfielder with an appetite for goals. It is no



+ TODAY'S VISITORS +

Hibs want that elusive Euro spot

surprise that he has received international honours from his native Northern Ireland. Has been linked with moves to England this season but seems quite settled in Edinburgh where he is producing some sparkling stuff.

PAT MCGINLAY has returned to Easter Road after a spell with the Bhoys in which he finished top scorer. A powerful midfielder with great vision who is able to release players with inch perfect passing. His goal tally while at Celtic Park also emphasises his ability for finding the net. The kind of midfielder every manager would like in his side. Pat has been tipped for a place in the B squad for later this month.

BILLY FINDLAY is a true utility man who can turn his hand to most positions on the field. Has been in and out the Hibernian side this season but can always be trusted to put in a fine performance when asked.

KEITH WRIGHT burst on to the scene at Hibs with a bang after his move from Tayside. Goals, goals and more goals had him on the verge of a Scotland call-up. But a drop of form and injury problems have seen him out of the headlines. Returned to the Hibs team recently and is again banging in then goals. Always dangerous, he has the knack of being in the right place in the box at the right time.

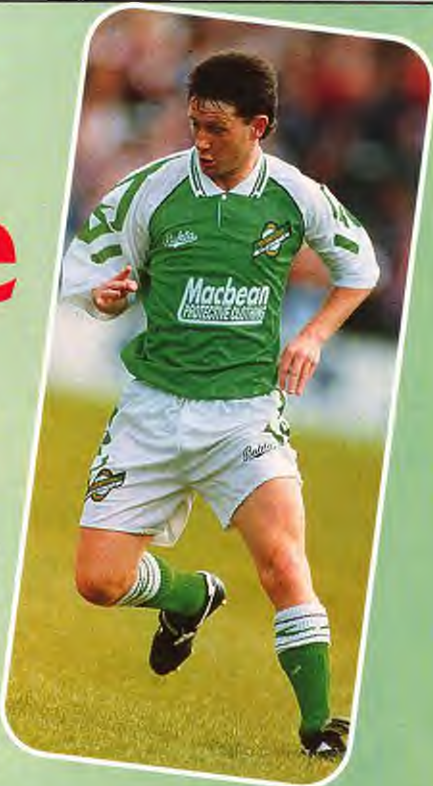
GARETH EVANS seems to be over his unsettled spell when their were rumours of him returning to England. Pacy and good on the ball he finds the back of the net as well as putting in balls for Jackson and Wright.

JOE TORTOLANO is another of the Hibs players who spends a lot of his time on the bench. Can always be relied upon when asked.

KEVIN HARPER is perhaps Hibs finest prospect. A natural goal scorer he has pace and real ability. Given time he could really become a star.

★ CLASSY WINGER...

Kevin McAllister is from the old school of wingmen. Comfortable on the ball his speed and accuracy of passing are his real danger weapons.



+ Lowdown + Lowdown +

JIM LEIGHTON (Aged 36)

Signed from Dundee, 1993

WILLIE MILLER (Aged 25)

Signed from Edina Hibs BC, 1987

STEVEN TWEED (Aged 22)

Signed from Hutchison Vale, 1990

GORDON HUNTER (Aged 27)

Signed from Musselburgh, 1983

GRAHAM MITCHELL (Aged 32)

Signed from Hamilton, 1986

KEVIN McALLISTER (Aged 32)

Signed from Falkirk, 1993

DARREN JACKSON (Aged 28)

Signed from Dundee Utd, 1992

PAT MCGINLAY, (Aged 27)

Signed from Celtic, 1994

BILLY FINDLAY (Aged 24)

Signed from Kilmarnock BC, 1987

KEITH WRIGHT (Aged 29)

Signed from Dundee, 1991

MICHAEL O'NEILL (Aged 24)

Signed from Dundee Utd, 1993

GARETH EVANS (Aged 27)

Signed from Rotherham, 1988

JOE TORTOLANO (Aged 28)

Signed from West Brom, 1985

KEVIN HARPER (Aged 18)

Signed from Hutchison Vale, 1992



Defender who lived his dream

The big INTERVIEW

JIM SLAVIN

“ To play for the first team was a boyhood dream come true ”

THE year may be only six weeks old, but already in 1995 centre-half Jim Slavin has taken greater strides towards his first team ambitions, than in any other year of his professional career.

Although the big man might be back turning out for the reserves, his three appearances for the senior side last month have put him in great heart.

20-year-old Jim managed to cram his three full team appearances into an eight-day period.

Dundee United, Hearts and Kilmarnock where the visitors for those three matches all played at Hampden and despite the stiff opposition, the youngster came through with flying colours with the defence performing soundly throughout.

The first two games were drawn while a 2-1 victory over Kilmarnock completed the set for Jim in his hectic introduction to the first-team plans.

He said: "I was delighted at making my first-team debut and despite it being a big step up I didn't notice all that much difference between reserve and top team football.

"That's probably because in the reserves you are playing against first-team players nearly every week as well as playing alongside them in our own second string.

"Obviously there WAS a difference between the two levels but to be honest it wasn't all that much.

"In my first game I was up against Craig Brewster and Christian Daily so I was quite pleased with my performance against them.

Dream

"But more than anything I was just pleased at the opportunity to play some first-team football.

"It must be everybody's boyhood dream to play for the team they support and I feel very honoured at being given the chance with Celtic."

In fact he was surprisingly flung in at the deep end as 24 hours before his debut he played at Brockville against Falkirk in a 2-0 reserve victory which started a tally of four games in nine days for the Lanark-born Celt.

He said: "After the Falkirk match I was told I would be on first-team duty.

"But I thought at the best I might make

Interview: JOE SULLIVAN

the bench so I was obviously pleased when the team was announced.

"And to play in the next two games also was a bit of a surprise in what was a whirlwind week for me.

"I was happy with my performances in the three games though I know I can do better.

"And I thought I was unlucky not to score against Kilmarnock when a shot was knocked off the line. It was just one of those things.

"They always seem to go in during training but when it comes to an actual match something always seems to stop the ball from reaching the target."

Indeed the defender has only found the net once this season in the Premier Reserve League and that solitary goal isn't something he is exactly proud of.

He explained: "I would hope to add to that tally before the end of the season as I'm really disappointed about not scoring more.

"I scored back in September in our 2-0 victory over Partick Thistle so not getting on the mark since then has been annoying.

"I should be getting more goals though so hopefully I can do something about that as soon as possible."

The defender didn't have many chances to score against Motherwell reserves on Tuesday at Barrowfield as along with Barry Smith he was too busy halting the threat of Fir Park

striker Steve Kirk.

Although Kirk managed a goal Jim and his team-mates had the last laugh with John O'Neill and Andy Walker netting to give the Celts three vital points in the league run-in.

He said: "I've played against Steve Kirk before so I sort of knew what to expect.

"But the most important thing was getting a good result and we achieved that in the end.

"Now that I've had a wee run with the first team I've settled back in the reserves and if there is one thing I am sure of it is that Frank Connor will keep me right.

"The league is still our main target and there is the cup to play for so hopefully we can finish the same as last year with the double."

Bonus

He added: "Although I know I still have my apprenticeship to serve as a reserve player I would love another crack at the first team and I would regard any appearances as a bonus for me.

"Hopefully I will get the chance before the end of the season if I keep plugging away in the second team."

Jim was drafted into a defence that has had more than its fair share of formation changes this season.

He explained: "I've already played in a few different formations for the reserves and to be honest it doesn't matter to me who I play alongside.

"For my debut I lined up alongside Brian O'Neil and he really helped me through the game as did Tom Boyd and Mark McNally.

"They all did their bit to help but what made things even easier for me was that a couple of my reserve pals were already in the side.

"With guys like Stuart Gray and Brian McLaughlin there before me it helped pave the way not just on the pitch but also in the dressing room before the match."



