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CELTIC v HIBERNIAN

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

CELTIC PARK

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2001

KICK-OFF 6.05PM



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ONCE again, I'm in the difficult position of having to pen my notes in advance of our midweek match taking place.

Therefore, as I write, I don't know if you will be travelling to today's big game buoyed by a victory over Motherwell or disappointed your team have dropped valuable points.

It's far from ideal, I know, but I am happy to comply since I'm fully aware the early printing deadlines are there to facilitate shipping the programmes across to the thousands upon thousands of fans we have on the other side of the Irish sea.

I have been delighted to discover so many of my fellow countrymen make the long journey to cheer us on week in, week out, and hopefully this service will be of benefit to them.

In any case, my crystal ball allows me to predict two things in advance of Wednesday night's game: one, that it will have been an extremely tough encounter; and two, that we will still be sitting at the top of the league.

Nevertheless, today we face a team which, all season, has been vying with us for supremacy in the SPL and one which, confounding its critics, has maintained its title challenge.

At the start of the season, I don't believe many people would have expected Hibs, a club with considerably more modest resources than either of their Glasgow rivals, to still be serious challengers at this advanced stage of the season.

That they are owes largely to the excellent job Alex McLeish has done at Easter Road in building a fine squad of players since his side's promotion just two seasons ago.

We have already faced them twice this season, doing well to win the first match 3-0 here at Celtic Park and showing a great deal of grit and determination to fight out a 0-0 draw in difficult conditions in Edinburgh.

Today, we know that a victory will allow us to take another step closer to the league championship, but Hibs are still chasing the same prize - and at the very least a Champions League place - and we will have to match them in every department to succeed.

Fortunately, I have had no cause to question our players' attitude and application so far, and I can't see them being anything other than completely focused on what



AFTER EIGHT: Alan Thompson laps up a Larsson strike in the 3-0 win v Hibs

Hibs' challenge still to the fore

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we all know will be such a vital match.

One player who will not be taking part for us is Mark Burchill, who we have allowed to go down on loan to George Burley's Ipswich Town until the end of the season.

The immediate possibility of first-team games in the English Premiership was certainly a big lure for him and, with the outstanding form of Henrik Larsson and Chris Sutton, he felt his first-team opportunities here might be limited.

I know that we are not blessed with an over-abundance of strikers - something I intend to act on during the summer - but, in the short term at least, I feel that we have just enough to cover.

Tommy Johnson is once again available after injury and Simon Lynch

continues to show plenty of potential in the under-21 side, and I would have no problem with throwing either of these lads in should one of our two main strikers pick up a knock.

Whoever plays today, I would once again ask you all to get right behind each and every one of them. Celtic Park can be a massive weapon in our armoury and, with 60,000 people raising the roof, we can make sure that no-one finds it the least bit comfortable to visit our home patch.



Tommy Johnson

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celtic:

probable formation 3-5-2

hibernian:

probable formation 3-5-2



subs	
celtic	hibernian

Referee: STUART DOUGAL

Assistant Referees: DAVID DOIG

BRIAN McDUFFIE

Fourth Official: DAVID SOMERS



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 (Blackburn)
- 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
- 27 Mark BURCHILL (Ipswich)
- 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

hibernian squad

- 1 Nick COLGAN
- 2 Derek COLLINS
- 3 Ulrik LAURSEN
- 4 Franck SAUZEE
- 6 Shaun DENNIS
- 7 Stuart LOVELL
- 8 Grant BREBNER
- 9 Mixu PAATELAINEN
- 10 Russell LATAPY
- 11 John O'NEILL
- 13 Ian WESTWATER
- 14 Paul FENWICK
- 15 Lyndon ANDREWS
- 16 Dirk LEHMANN
- 17 Tom SMITH
- 18 Gary SMITH
- 19 Mathias JACK
- 20 David ZITELLI
- 21 Marc LIBBRA
- 22 Mark DEMPSIE
- 23 Scott BANNERMAN
- 24 Emilio BOTTIGLIERI
- 25 Hakim Sar-TEMSOURY
- 26 Ian MURRAY
- 27 Tom McMANUS
- 28 Alan REID
- 29 Liam O'SULLIVAN
- 30 Colin MORTON
- 31 Thomas PHILLIPS



Former Celtic and Hibernian striker Andy Walker runs the rule over Alex McLeish's entertaining side

Hibs a breath of fresh air to SPL

ALEX McLEISH has had a wonderful season so far and has earned numerous richly-deserved plaudits. Even I would have to concede he's making better decisions now than he was a few years ago when his first mistake on taking over at the club was to get rid of me!

He's obviously learned since then and much of Hibs' success has been down to the form of the meanest defence in the SPL. With so many options going forward, it's no wonder

they have become one of the most attractive teams to watch this season. Part of that attraction has been the form of **RUSSELL LATAPY** and it's a huge blow for them that he misses out tonight, with **LYNDON ANDREWS**, because of international duty.

But there are many other class acts. The form of **NICK COLGAN** has been a real inspiration and his displays have been rewarded with a call-up to the Irish international squad.

In a three-man defence, two of Hibs' unsung heroes this season have been **GARY SMITH** and **PAUL**

FENWICK. The form of Fenwick in particular should be an inspiration to all those playing in the First Division because it highlights that, with a bit of consistency, you can get yourself a move to a bigger club.

Smith should also be applauded for the way he has turned his career around when it looked as if he was going nowhere with Aberdeen. At times he was ridiculed along with the rest of the Aberdeen players but I have always thought he's a strong defender and his use of the ball can be very good.

I wouldn't underestimate, however, the influence **FRANCK SAUZEE** has had on both of these players. In my view, he is a fantastic professional. His will to win remains very high and, in every game I see him play, his determination and reading of the way moves are developing is a joy to watch. After all that, his ability on the ball, especially his long-range passing, highlights him as one of the players of the season.

In the wing-back areas, Hibs have had tremendous service from **ULRIK LAURSEN** and **STUART LOVELL**. Both have been regulars in this position and Laurson only has Arthur Numan for competition as Scotland's best.

The Dane is so powerful when he gets going down the left and, defensively, he's excellent. Lovell has adapted well to the role of wing-back because I seem to remember him as a striker with his former club Reading. He's lost none of that goalscoring instinct, though, and has scored a few



JACK TUSSLE: Hibs' Matthias challenges Celtic strike ace Chris Sutton



FRANCK'S A LOT:
French star
Sauzee laps up a
strike with Aussie
ace Stuart Lovell

this season, notably his effort at Tynecastle when he put away a cross from his fellow wing-back Laursen.

The balance of Hibs' midfield is another strength. **MATTHIAS JACK** does a marvellous job. He can easily stop the threat of creative opposing players by playing that sitting role in the middle and, at 6'3", he's a formidable figure in their engine room. Jack is quite happy to stop others playing and break up moves, which then allows the likes of **JOHN O'NEIL** to go and express themselves.

O'Neil has great qualities on the ball and, as well as being creative, he can be aggressive too. Once he gets into that final third, he's not afraid to take defenders on and get a cross in. With Latapy out of the picture tonight, Alex might turn to **IAN MURRAY** who has been on the fringes of first-team action and has provided regular cover in a number of defensive areas.

GRANT BREBNER might come into consideration tonight but he hasn't progressed this season as I hoped.

Up front **MIXU PAATELAINEN** has had a great season and is a real threat in the opposition box. One of the reasons for his success has been his decision to retire from the international scene. Hibs are certainly reaping the benefits. The Finn's main striking partner is **DAVID ZITELLI**, who signed from Strasbourg. Many of his goals are spectacular and one of the strikes of this season was his effort at Dens Park to clinch victory there.

Hibs are fortunate to have the experienced **DIRK LEHMANN** to challenge for a first-team place. His aggression in the air is a good option to have and he's scored many times this season from the sub's bench.

Another option up front for Hibs tonight is **TOM MCMANUS**, who is knocking on the first-team door and got good experience by going on loan to Airdrie over the winter break. Loan signing from Toulouse, striker **MARC LIBBRA**, may also be in the squad, although the 28-year-old could be short of match fitness.



TRINIDAD AND TOBAG-NO-GO:
Russell Latapy
will miss out

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TODAY'S MATCH

4/11 CELTIC
3/1 DRAW
11/2 HIBERNIAN

NO.OF GOALS

0-1 4/11
2-3 3/1
4+ 11/2

NO.OF CORNERS

0-9 6/4
10-12 7/4
13+ 6/4

TODAY'S MATCH

H/T I/T
CELTIC - CELTIC
4/5
DRAW - CELTIC
4/1
HIBS - CELTIC
28/1
CELTIC - DRAW
18/1
DRAW - DRAW
6/1
HIBS - DRAW
14/1
CELTIC - HIBS
40/1
DRAW - HIBS
14/1
HIBS - HIBS
11/1

CORRECT SCORE

CELTIC TO WIN

1-0	7/1	28/1	3-2
2-0	11/2	14/1	4-0
2-1	7/1	33/1	5-0
3-0	15/2	66/1	6-0
3-1	9/1		

DRAW

0-0 12/1
1-1 6/1
2-2 18/1

HIBERNIAN TO WIN

1-0 11/1
2-0 40/1
2-1 25/1



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21ST CENTURY BHOY: Larsson hits Celtic's 100th SPL goal against Hibs at Celtic Park from the spot last time

Henrik rarely fails to make his mark

THERE are just two Scottish grounds where Henrik Larsson has played a competitive match for Celtic and not scored.

One is Easter Road where he made his Bhoys' debut, coming on as a substitute in a 2-1 defeat and in a further three games he has still to find the back of the net. The other ground? Stair Park, Stranraer less than a month ago in the Scottish Cup.

IN 37 competitive matches this season Celtic have scored 104 goals. In only one of the 37 games have Celtic failed to score. That was at Easter Road on November 29 when adverse weather ruined the top-of-the-table clash and the match ended goalless.

THE highest scoring draw Celtic have ever played in is 4-4, on no fewer that

11 occasions. In fact, two of those came at Easter Road, the first in a league match on January 16, 1926 and the second came in a Skol Cup tie on September 4, 1985 which Hibs went on to win 4-3 on penalties.

SINCE World War II, Celtic have been involved in four matches that have been abandoned and one of those was against Hibernian. On October 19, 1975 referee Bobby Davidson had no alternative after thick fog descended on Celtic Park with the visitors leading comfortably 2-0. The re-match ended 1-1, with Dixie Deans scoring his customary goal against Hibs.

HENRIK LARSSON'S penalty against Hibs on their last visit here was Celtic's 100th Premier/SPL goal against the Edinburgh club at Celtic Park. In total the Hoops have scored 106 home

Premier/SPL goals against Hibernian, including the four at Hampden.

IN the above 3-0 win, Mark Burchill became the 63rd player to score for Celtic against Hibs in the Premier/SPL.

THE biggest crowd at a football match in Scotland this season (60,091) saw the first clash of the greens.

HIBERNIAN have won just two of their last 26 league matches against Celtic.

TWO players have both played and scored for Celtic and Hibs in this fixture in the Premier/SPL. George McCluskey (5 for Celtic, 1 for Hibs) and John Collins (4 for Celtic, 1 for Hibs). Pat McGinlay has played and scored for both clubs but he was playing for Hibs when he scored for Celtic.

DAVID McDONALD