



Celtic

v Brechin City • William Hill Scottish Cup • Saturday, January 20, 2018 • Celtic Park • KO: 3pm • £3.50



OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Full name:

Kristoffer Vassbakk Ajer

Date of birth:

April 17, 1998

Place of birth:

Rælingen, Norway

Height: **1.96 m (6 ft 5 in)**



Defender

Kristoffer

Ajer

35



William HILL
SCOTTISH CUP



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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.

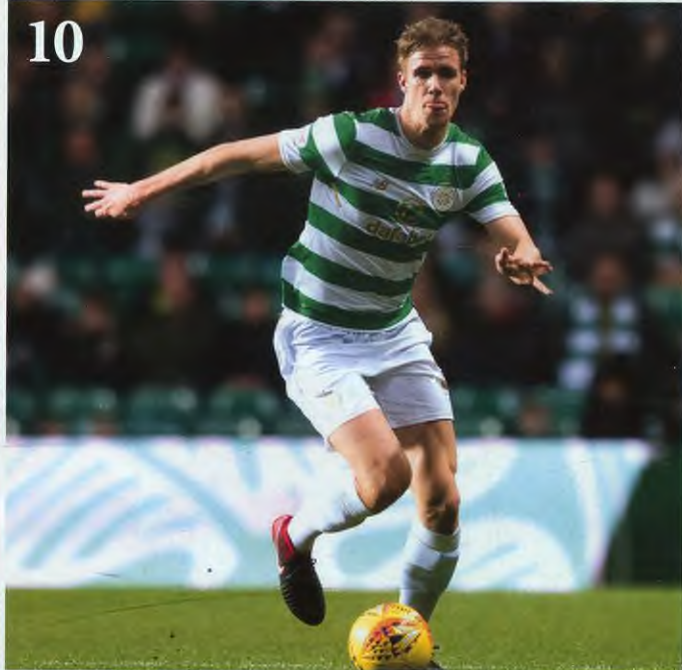
Who is Celtic Football Club for?

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





A history of cup shocks means there will be no complacency in our squad

GOOD afternoon and welcome to Celtic Park for today's Scottish Cup tie against Brechin City. I would also like to extend that welcome to the management, players and supporters of Brechin who have made the trip to our stadium this afternoon.

It is good to be back home for what is our first game of 2018 and it's one that we're all looking forward to. It's the first step on a journey that we hope will end at Hampden at the end of this season, and, like every competition we enter, the Scottish Cup is a trophy we want to win this season.

I'm sure you all have great memories from last season's competition, and we want to create more memories this time around.

That journey starts with today's game against Brechin City, and while we go into the game as strong favourites, our preparations for the tie have taken no account of that. The players will be focused solely on this game and we will give our opponents the respect they deserve.

Darren and his squad will come here, looking to enjoy the experience but also determined to give us a tough contest. One of our toughest games last season was a Scottish Cup tie here against Championship opposition in the shape of St Mirren, so there will be no complacency within our squad today.

The history of cup competitions has plenty of examples of shock results, so it is important that we go into this game with the same attitude and application that we have for any other game. That has always been the approach from the players here and it will be the case against Brechin City.

We enjoyed a very good week working at our training camp in Dubai and that, along with the break the players had at the turn of the year, means that we have come back refreshed and reinvigorated,



'From the heat of Dubai to winter snow at Lennoxtown, it was certainly a cold welcome back'

and looking forward to the second half of the season.

Of course, the contrast for us between last week and this couldn't have been starker. From the heat of Dubai to winter snow at Lennoxtown, it was certainly a cold welcome back.

That hasn't stopped a good week of training for the players, and we're well prepared for the 90 minutes ahead. A special thank you to Danny and the groundstaff at Lennoxtown for giving us a pitch to train on this week. They've been working tirelessly to give us the best chance to work and for that I thank them.

I'm sure, too, that after a break from competitive football these past few weeks, our supporters will be eager for the action to resume and will give us the backing that they are renowned for.

Brendan Rodgers
Without Fear

FURON
flare



UNMISSABLE


new balance

ALWAYS
IN BETA



A word with our captain...

SCOTT BROWN

Our success lies in the fact that we approach each match in the same way – regardless of the opposition



IT'S our first game back after the winter break and all the lads are looking forward to it. We had some time off, which was great for everyone, and then we had the training camp in Dubai.

The weather was obviously a lot better than it's been here, and has been this week, and we did a lot of hard work every day.

Going away for some warm winter training this time last year was a great benefit for us, and we're hoping that it will prove to be the case again this season.

As well as working hard on the training pitch, it was also a good chance for the lads to spend a bit of time together before we kick-off the rest of our 2017/18 campaign with the visit

of Brechin City this afternoon in the Scottish Cup – a trophy we want to win again this year after our success in the competition last season.

We have a brilliant record at home under the gaffer and that's something we intend to continue this afternoon.

But even though we're top of the Premiership and Brechin City are bottom of the Championship, we've prepared for this game with the same level of detail as we do for every game.

That is a key element in our success here. We take it one game at a time, and approach each match with the same attitude, regardless of the opposition.

And with it being a cup game, we know what's at stake. We're determined to be in the draw for the next round of

the competition, and the lads will be focused on doing just that.

It will also be good to be back playing in front of our own supporters. We've got a busy schedule of games coming up, with a few home fixtures, both domestically and in Europe. There is nothing like playing at Celtic Park, and it's our fans who make it a special venue for us.

Let's hope we can kick off 2018 with a Scottish Cup win this afternoon. Enjoy the game.

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Celts head out on loan

ERIK Svatchenko has returned to Denmark, joining his former club, FC Midtjylland, on loan until the end of this season.

The 26-year-old Danish internationalist signed for Celtic from FC Midtjylland back in January 2016, and since then he has gone on to make 63 appearances for the Hoops scoring two goals. He has also won two league titles, two League Cups and the Scottish Cup.



The defender, who has been capped five times by Denmark, will be also be hoping to push his way back into the Danish national squad ahead of this summer's World Cup tournament.

Nadir Ciftci has joined Motherwell on loan until the end of this season. The Turkish striker has met up with his new team-mates at their training camp



in Tenerife, having previously been on loan at English League One side, Plymouth Argyle.

The 25-year-old signed for Celtic from Dundee United back in July 2015 and has made 26 appearances for the Hoops, scoring four goals. Now he returns to the Scottish Premiership for the remainder of the season.

Another Celt who went out on loan last week was young midfielder, Mark Hill who has joined Championship club St Mirren until the end of the season.

The 19-year-old has been a regular for the Development Squad over recent years, and he has also featured regularly in the UEFA Youth League and the Premier League International Cup.

He signed a new three-year contract with the club in May 2017 after another campaign of positive progress.



The Hoops youngster started for Brendan Rodgers' side in the pre-season friendly against Olympique Lyonnais. He was also part of the recent winter training camp in Dubai and has now joined the Buddies to garner competitive first-team experience and continue his development.

The latest trio to move out on loan have joined the group that went out on loan over the New Year period as young midfielder, Kundai Beryu joined League One side Oldham Athletic on

loan until the end of the season.

The 20-year-old joined the Hoops last summer from Ipswich Town and he has made four appearances for Brendan Rodgers' side, which included two outings in the UEFA Champions League qualifiers and for the remainder of the campaign he will continue his football development with Richie Wellens' side.

Regan Hendry joined League One side Raith Rovers on a Development Loan until the end of the season.

The young midfielder has been a regular for the Hoops' second-string for several seasons and he scored twice for the Bhoys in this season's UEFA Youth League campaign.

The 19-year-old, who featured for Brendan Rodgers' side in their pre-season friendly against Olympique Lyonnais, will be looking to continue his development by gaining competitive first-team experience at Starks Park.

Meanwhile, fellow midfielder Joe Thomson moved to Championship side, Queen of the South on an Emergency Loan.

It will be the 20-year-old's second stint with the Doonhamers after he spent the second half of last season with them.

Everyone at Celtic wishes each of the players every success during their loan spells with their respective clubs.



Exclusive interview: **Tony Connelly**

WINTER

Wonderland

Kristoffer Ajer is looking forward to getting back to action following the warm-weather break in Dubai



KRISTOFFER Ajer rounded off 2017 with a run of impressive performances in the Celtic defence as he showcased the strides he has made in his development as a centre-back. Now after returning from a productive training camp in Dubai the young Norwegian is geared up to make an impact in the second half of the season.

Ajer enjoyed his longest run in the starting XI last month, Brendan Rodgers selecting him in the team three days after Celtic lost to Hearts at Tynecastle and he helped the team keep a keep sheet in the subsequent four games.

The manager praised the 19-year-old's performances and highlighted the value of his loan spell at Kilmarnock the previous season in helping him develop as a player.

"The run-up to the end of the year was a good series of games for me," Ajer told the matchday programme. "I was able to get some games, which makes a huge difference to improving as a player."

"I've been working really hard since I arrived here to get the opportunity to play and the gaffer rewarded me for that hard work. He puts a lot of faith into his players and when we're put into the team we know our jobs."

"Looking back it was a great experience for me to play in those games and I feel it helped me develop a lot."

That development continued during the winter break when the squad met up in Dubai following a week off to begin

