

Celtic

V PARTICK TH

**BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
TUESDAY 2nd MAY
7.30 PM KICK-OFF**

INSIDE

**REVIEW OF THE
SEASON!!!!!!!
4-PAGE PULL-OUT
PICTURE SPECIAL**

**PIERRE VAN HOOIJDONK'S
BIG INTERVIEW**

**ALL THE NEWS AND
VIEWS FROM CELTIC FC**



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TOMMY BURNS



I WOULD like to welcome tonight's visitors Partick Thistle to Hampden.

Our penultimate league clash of the season at our temporary home, we hope we can provide the fans with a good game of football.

Our vital victory over Falkirk last Saturday really pleased me as it was on a difficult ground, against a team on a high who are very strong physically and have been playing well recently.

Their confidence was up and we knew that we would have to work hard to beat them.

We did that and thoroughly deserved our win. We have to play the same way tonight and get a similar sort of result against Thistle.

For a long time I think people have only thought we could play so-called 'pretty' football, but that is not the way it is as we demonstrated at Brockville.

It is pointless if the other team is going to try and shut you down every time you start to play – we know that and are prepared to battle.

Obviously when you play different teams, you have to adapt accordingly. And on Saturday we had to play hard and fight for the points. I am glad that we managed to do so.

We are hoping to do the same again tonight and I would like all the supporters to get behind the lads and help make it happen.

The last time Partick played here the atmosphere was terrible, and that can suit opposing teams.

They will rely on sitting in and making our players frustrated at having to fight to break them down. In turn that gets the supporters annoyed which then that filters through to the pitch.

And clubs will try to do that. So what I ask of you, the supporter, tonight is to roar the team on at every opportunity.

That is very important and the players definitely respond to support from the stands as has been shown in previous matches this season.

The players must show real hunger to win in our remaining fixtures and I hope the fans will too.

I don't want any other teams to think that they can turn our fans against us.

‘The players respond to support from the stands but they must show a hunger

We are chasing second spot in the table and we want European football next season as it is the only way for this club to go.

Celtic needs the kind of game the European arena can provide, and I'm hopeful we are now on the right path.

And what we all must have is the passion to compete and win every single game that we play in – starting tonight.



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CR SMITH

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BONNER**



**TOM
BOYD**



**RUDI
VATA**



**TONY
MOWBRAY**



**BRIAN
O'NEIL**



**PETER
GRANT**



**BRIAN
McLAUGHLIN**



**PAUL
McSTAY**



**WILLIE
FALCONER**



**ANDY
WALKER**



**JOHN
COLLINS**



**PHIL
O'DONNELL**



**SIMON
DONNELLY**



**Referee:
W YOUNG
(Clarkston)**



**Linesman:
J UNDERHILL
(Edinburgh)**



**Linesman:
R WILLIAMSON
(Dumfries)**

STAND-BYS:
**Celtic: Gordon
Marshall (GK),
Jim Slavin,
Garry
Carberry.**
**Thistle: Mark
Cairns (GK),
Andy Gibson,
Thomas
Smith**

**NICKY
WALKER**



**ALAN
DINNIE**



**STEVE
PITMAN**



**GREGG
WATSON**



**STEVE
WELSH**



**TOMMY
TURNER**



**ALBERT
CRAIG**



**DEREK
McWILLIAMS**



**IAN
CAMERON**



**ALEX
TAYLOR**



**RODDY
GRANT**



**ROD
McDONALD**



**CALUM
MILNE**



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

CR SMITH



+ TONIGHT'S VISITORS +

PARTICK
18
76
THISTLE

Thistle have hauled themselves off the bottom of the Premier League but are still involved in the relegation dogfight. When the chips are down Manager John Lambie seems to bring out the best in the Jags. In the last encounter back in January, Partick fought out a tough 0-0 draw and will be looking for more of the same.



★ THE BOSS ...
John Lambie is a legend around Maryhill but can he pull off another great survival act and keep Thistle up.

NICKY WALKER came to Firhill when Jags' favourite Craig Nelson left to go to Tynecastle.

Walker had a hard act to follow but he became a hero to the Thistle fans with his performance against Celtic earlier this year.

Time and again he kept the Celtic strikers at bay with a string of fine saves. His performance earned him a starting place in the recent B international and he is currently part of the full national side.

A quality keeper with a great deal of experience.

KEVIN MCKEE took a little time to make the right-back spot his own but he seems to be getting a regular game in the Thistle side at the moment. Always willing to take part in attacking moves, McKee adds an extra dimension to the Firhill side. Alan Dinnie's suspension and injury has boosted his appearances for the season.

STEVE PITTMAN is a tough tackling and attacking full back who came to Firhill from Dundee. You definitely don't want to be in a 50-50 tackle with this guy! John Lambie knew what he was doing bringing Pittman from Tayside because there are few better in a backs-to-the-wall situation.

GREGG WATSON was tipped for stardom when he was with Aberdeen but when you have Willie Miller and Alex McLeish in front of you it was always going to be difficult getting into the first team. Probably Lambie's finest signing in recent seasons he is steady at the back and very composed.

STEVE WELSH was bought from Petersborough to fill the gap vacated by Willie Jamieson's departure. Although a Scot, he is little known north of the border but yet again he was a fine bargain signing from Lambie. Always dangerous at set pieces he is making a good partnership with Watson in the centre of defence.

TOMMY TURNER was a surprise signing when he came to Thistle from St Johnstone but his vital goal against Aberdeen recently to grab a valuable point for the Jags has made him a Firhill favourite. Experienced and hard-working he is finding a home in the midfield engine room and if he can get more goals he could prove Thistle's saviour.

RODDY GRANT played with Turner at St Johnstone and is Thistle's target man. Loses very little in the air he is an old-fashioned, bustling Scottish striker. Recovered from a horror eye injury to help Thistle in their fight to beat the drop.

ALBERT CRAIG leads Thistle by example. He



+ TONIGHT'S VISITORS +

Thistle are fighting for their Premier lives

will give his all for the cause and is desperate to do his absolute best for the Maryhill side. The Thistle fans often look to him to create miracles but, even when not at the top of his game, he has a great influence in those around him.

WAYNE FOSTER came from Hearts to get goals for Thistle. A proven goalscorer he found it difficult to break through at Tynecastle with the likes of John Robertson and John Colquhoun in the team. Small and pacy, he can prove a nightmare for tall defenders. Must get the goals if he is to help Thistle stay in the Premier Division.

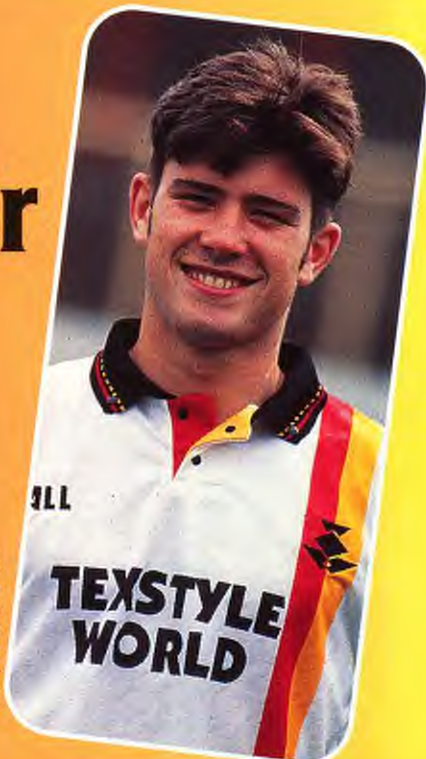
IAN CAMERON is a rare breed of educated footballer. Was part of the St Mirren cup winning side before moving to Aberdeen where he found it hard to settle. Came to Thistle and hasn't looked back. His work rate is sometimes questioned but his ability is not.

DEREK McWILLIAMS is another journeyman professional who started his Thistle career with a bang when he netted a stormer in the opening game of the season against Kilmarnock. Still capable of getting goals it is his distribution that is more vital to the Jags. His crosses from the wings are always dangerous.

ROD McDONALD came from Walsall to help Thistle in their relegation fight. A pacy striker with a true goal-scoring threat he is finding it hard to settle at Firhill. Dropped down to the bench recently but he can always come on and cause any defence problems.

TOM SMITH seems to have been at Thistle for years but is still a relative youngster and still unable to break into the side on a permanent basis. Celtic, however know to their cost that he can get goals and he led Thistle's fightback against Aberdeen a few weeks ago.

★ **YOUNG JAG ...**
Tom Smith has come off the bench to score vital goals for Thistle as the Maryhill side fight for their Premier Division survival this season.



+ Lowdown + Lowdown+

NICKY WALKER (Aged 32)

Signed from Hearts, 1994

KEVIN McKEE (Aged 28)

Signed from Hamilton, 1991

STEVE PITTMAN (Age 27)

Signed from Dundee, 1994

GREGG WATSON (Aged 24)

Signed from Aberdeen, 1993

STEVE WELSH (Aged 28)

Signed from Peterborough, 1994

TOMMY TURNER (Aged 31)

Signed from St Johnstone, 1994

RODDY GRANT (Aged 28)

Signed from Dunfermline, 1993

ALBERT CRAIG (Aged 32)

Signed from Dundee, 1992

WAYNE FOSTER (Aged 31)

Signed from Hearts, 1994

IAN CAMERON (Aged 28)

Signed from Aberdeen, 1992

DEREK McWILLIAMS (Aged 27)

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ROD McDONALD (Aged 27)

Signed from Walsall, 1994

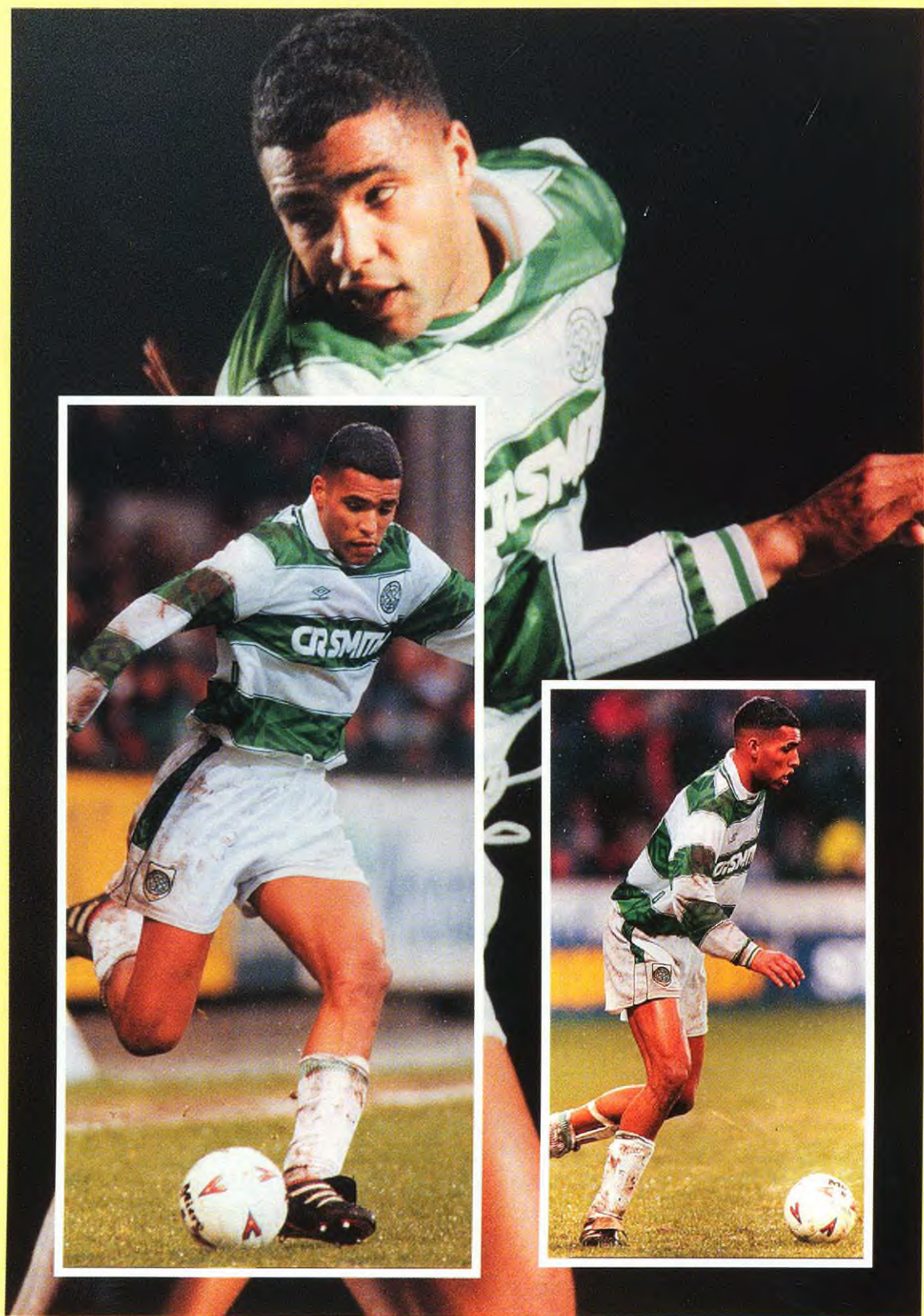
TOM SMITH (Age 21)

Signed from Cork City, 1992

CHIC CHARNLEY (Age 31)

Signed from Djurgarden, 1993





Striker out for success

The big INTERVIEW PIERRE VAN HOOIJDONK

“The gap between Celtic and Rangers at the moment is a big one and we have to bridge it”

DUTCH master Pierre van Hooijdonk is having a ball playing for Celtic and hopes to cap his first season with a cup winners' medal.

The big striker has settled in well since his £1.25 million move from Breda in January and, despite being out for most of April with a hamstring injury, has no regrets about moving to Scotland.

Since arriving at Parkhead Pierre has become something of a hero to the Celtic faithful, netting six goals in 13 games.

And tonight, against Partick Thistle, he hopes to return to the side and immediately set about adding to his goal tally.

Pierre said: "I have enjoyed my time at Celtic so far, apart from being a little bit disappointed at missing out on the last few matches with injury.

"I've never had any problems before in all my six years as a professional footballer but this injury came at a really bad time.

"I picked up the knock in the first semi-final against Hibs which meant I was out of the replay.

"But I was very pleased that we won that match 3-1 and got to the final. Now I have that to look forward to. Playing in that game and winning would be a fantastic way to end my first season here."

Pierre was brought to Celtic Park to score goals and that he has done.

He averages a goal every other game following his flying start by hitting a spectacular strike on his debut in the 1-1 draw with Hearts at Hampden.

But the 25-year old hitman admits he isn't satisfied with that tally - just as he wouldn't be if it were double that amount.

He explained: "I think you are always hoping to better yourself, that's the way you have to look at it.

"You can never say that the way you are playing or the amount of goals you have is fine - you have to strive for better.

"And I hope that will happen. We need to be creating more chances as well though. We played well against Hibs in the 3-1 game, made a lot of chances and that is how it should be in every game.

"But in other matches we seem to have a problem creating openings. In general we dictate the play and have 90 per cent of possession but don't make enough chances. That is something I

Interview: MERLE BROWN

hope we can all sort out in the last few games.

"As for me personally, scoring on my debut was great. That is what any new player wants to do if they are a striker and have been bought to score goals."

The big man certainly has made his mark with an ever-growing legion of fans watching his every move and chanting his name at any given opportunity during matches.

Intense

And Pierre admits the intense passion for football in this country is something that surprises him.

He explained: "In Holland there are a group of people who are very passionate about football - but only a small section.

"In this country everyone seems to like football!

"I like that. I had good relations with the fans in Holland and it's nice to have the same thing here."

As well as making an impact on the fans for his footballing skills, Pierre has been a back-page headliner for another trait that he insists is a fallacy.

Twice this season he has tumbled in the box and Celts have been awarded a penalty. On both occasions he has been accused of diving - but he is adamant that that is not the case at all.

He said: "Both penalties that I have won have come at crucial moments - the first to win 2-1 in the last few minutes of a league game against Kilmarnock, and then the second in an important league match with Aberdeen to open

the scoring.

"And I believe that any neutral fan watching these games would have seen that on the first occasion I was definitely held and on the second definitely pushed - I DID NOT DIVE.

"But players always get labelled something or another. For instance Jurgen Klinsmann acquired a name for supposedly diving for Germany but that has all been forgotten about now.

"If I'm treated fairly that will be the same for me."

Pierre is looking forward to his future with Celtic and hopes that he will be playing in a side that is once again seriously challenging arch rivals and Scottish champions Rangers.

And he believes that with a combination of talent that is already at the park and some new faces, Celtic can do just that.

He said: "The gap between Celtic and Rangers at the moment is a big one and we have to bridge it.

"To do that I think we need to have a few new players but that is only normal in football.

"There are good players here already and they are just as important. Brian O'Neil has impressed me at the back, as he plays football on the ground - the way I like it to be played.

"Also John Collins is a very skillful footballer and I think Simon Donnelly can become a great player in the future.

"I am just very happy to be here. We're in a cup final and I hope I can play in that game - I played in all the other rounds except the semi-final replay - and would love to turn-out for the winning side in the final.

"We MUST beat Airdrie. We cannot lose twice in once season to First Division opponents when we a club as big as Celtic.

"And of course I want to do well in the rest of the league games and make sure that we get into Europe, for playing in that arena is one of the reasons I came to this club."

