

# Celtic

**V RANGERS**

**BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE  
PREMIER DIVISION  
SUNDAY, MAY 7  
2.00PM KICK-OFF**

**INSIDE**

**CELTS' SCOTTISH  
CUP RUN  
4-PAGE PULL-OUT  
PICTURE SPECIAL**

**RUDI VATA'S  
BIG INTERVIEW**

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



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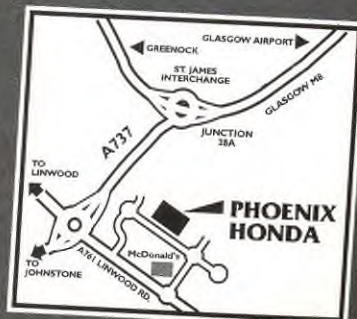


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# TOMMY BURNS



**I**T'S great to finish our home campaign at Hampden with an Old Firm fixture and we welcome Rangers here today as champions.

Although there is really nothing tangible to play for today there is of course still pride, which is always the main factor in Old Firm fixtures.

After the disappointment of a defeat like the one by Partick Thistle on Tuesday night, I think this is the type of game that you would choose to play next.

The last time Rangers visited Hampden they went away with a win but we will be doing all we can to ensure we come away with the three points.

That would also give us the better record over the course of the four Old Firm fixtures this season.

At the moment things stand evenly after three games played, with one win apiece and the other game drawn.

To emerge from a league campaign with the upper hand against our greatest rivals is always a nice feather in the cap.

We also want to finish as high up the Premier table as possible. But, that apart, the main thing from the players point of view is that there are cup final places up for grabs.

The way the remaining games in the league are approached by each and every player involved will be a big factor in establishing a cup final side.

And they know there must be no repeat of the Thistle result in our three remaining games.

I think for 43 minutes of Tuesday's match however, some of our football was the best we've produced on league duty at Hampden.

But not taking the chances that we worked so hard to create, cost us dear in the end.

And that has been the biggest single failing all season.

We are working hard to get rid of that element and obtain the ruthless streak that we need.

The players can stick the ball away in training all week, and do, but in games we have to show more presence of mind and make sure we put the ball in the net at every opportunity.

Once again I would appeal to the fans to get behind us, and make sure that we create an

atmosphere that will help give us the edge over our opponents.

And I hope we can respond to that by finding that killer instinct today and make sure we end our stay at Hampden in style.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Frank Connor, Tom McAdam and all the players on all but clinching the Premier Reserve title last week for the second year running.

**‘ We want to end our stay at Hampden in style with a win over our greatest rivals**



# **YET ANOTHER GREAT VAN TO BEAR THE CR SMITH NAME**



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**TOM BOYD**



**TOSH MCKINLAY**



**TONY MOWBRAY**



**BRIAN O'NEIL**



**PETER GRANT**



**PHIL O'DONNELL**



**PAUL MCSTAY**



**PIERRE VAN HOOIJDONK**



**WILLIE FALCONER**



**JOHN COLLINS**



**RUDI VATA**



**BRIAN McLAUGHLIN**



**Referee:**  
**L W MOTTRAM**  
(Forth)



**Linesman:**  
**T M McCurry**  
(Glasgow)



**Linesman:**  
**I CATHCART**  
(Br. of Allan)

**STAND-BYS:**  
**Celtic: Gordon Marshall (GK),**  
**Simon Donnelly,**  
**Stuart Gray**  
**Rangers: Neil Inglis (GK),**  
**Gary Bolland,**  
**Lee Robertson**



**MASCOT**

**Christopher Wood**

**Aged 5**  
**East Kilbride**

**BILLY THOMSON**



**ALEX CLELAND**



**ALEXI MIKHAILITCHENKO**



**RICHARD GOUGH**



**ALAN McLAREN**



**BASILE BOLI**



**TREVOR STEVEN**



**IAN FERGUSON**



**IAN DURRANT**



**MARK HATELEY**



**BRIAN LAUDRUP**



**NEIL MURRAY**



**CRAIG MOORE**



**IN ASSOCIATION WITH**

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# + TODAY'S VISITORS +



*Rangers are league champions yet again but as Motherwell showed last weekend they are not invincible. The rivalry between Rangers and Celtic goes back over the centuries but today it is the boys in green who will have most to gain from a win if they are to get that all important Euro spot. It goes without saying that the Ibrox men will go all out to stop them.*



**★ CAPTAIN OF MEN ... Gough is a great leader of those around him and is a classy defender**

**RUMOURS** abound that **Andy Goram** will be between the sticks today after a long lay-off through injury.

But it is unlikely and so Billy Thomson should retain the number one jersey.

Thomson is a seasoned, experienced keeper after successful spells with Dundee United and Motherwell but even he must have been surprised to get the call to Ibrox.

Uninjuries and loss of form to the other keepers on the Rangers' books have seen Thomson take to the field and he hasn't let anyone down.

ALEX CLELAND is another who was surprised to be on his way to Ibrox. He was getting rave reviews while at Tannadice and, although possibly only signed as a fringe player, he has performed well when in the top side.

A great prospect for the future - he is calm and assured under pressure.

ALEXI MIKHAILITCHENKO has had an awful season injury wise and has been out of the team for many months.

Came back recently and has found a new lease of life. Perhaps he is out to prove to Walter Smith that he doesn't want to be leaving Glasgow at the end of the season.

RICHARD GOUGH has his critics but he is arguably the best defender Scotland has produced. A great leader of those around him he gives his all for the club and maintains a very high standard on the field.

ALAN McLAREN was hailed as the best young defender in Britain while at Hearts and achieved a lot in the early part of his career. The move to Rangers was a dream come true for him. A strong, purposeful defender - very little gets by him.

BASILE BOLI has found it difficult to settle at Ibrox and he is rumoured to be on his way out in the summer. Still a skillful player who is rather over criticised.

His experience of big games means he will not be affected by the huge crowd. An important part of Rangers' solid defence.

TREVOR STEVEN is another whose season has been marred by injury. But now he is on his way back and is an important cog in the Ibrox club's midfield engine room.

A move to Marseilles a few seasons ago allowed him to experience the rigours of top French football but it is well known he was delighted to come back to Glasgow.

Able to provide inch-perfect killer passes that release the likes of Laudrup and Miller.

Has great experience and always raises his game for the big occasion.



# + TODAY'S VISITORS +

## League champs are a target for the Bhoys

IAN FERGUSON is probably the most under-rated of all in the Rangers team. Rarely gets the credit he deserves and gives 110 per cent in every game he plays.

Will always be remembered for the goal that gave St Mirren the Scottish Cup, Ferguson has matured from those early days into the typical midfield grafter - doing all the spade work while others get the credit.

Can be relied upon to find the net on occasions as well so Celtic will have to keep an eye on him today.

IAN DURRANT is an inspiration to many a young player after his recovery from the horrific injury he sustained at Pittodrie a number of seasons ago.

Looked to be heading to Everton after a loan spell earlier this season but it was clear his heart never wanted to leave Ibrox.

On his day the best passer of the ball in the land. Always raises his game on the big stage and there is no stage bigger than an Old Firm derby.

MARK HATELEY has recovered from injury and is now forcing his way back into the side.

In the box there are few who are as clinical in the air. Will keep a defence busy all day with his physical, robust style - he can always be counted on to find the net.

BRIAN LAUDRUP. Well, what can be said about this man that hasn't been said already. Even Celtic fans can see what a talent he is.

Perhaps his greatest talent is the ability to look as if he is hardly running yet ghost past defences. The Celtic defence will be well prepared for the classy Dane.

NEIL MURRAY is in and out of the first team but can be counted on to perform well.

★ **STAR MAN ...**  
**Alexi**  
*Mikhailitchenko is back in the first team after a long lay-off through injury*



## + Lowdown + Lowdown+

*BILLY THOMSON (Age 37)*

*Signed from Motherwell, 1994*

*ALEX CLELAND (Age 25)*

*Signed from Dundee United, 1995*

*ALEXI MIKHAILITCHENKO (Age 32)*

*Signed from Sampdoria, 1991*

*RICHARD GOUGH (Aged 33)*

*Signed from Spurs, 1987*

*ALAN McLAREN (Age 23)*

*Signed from Hearts, 1994*

*BASILE BOLI (Age 27)*

*Signed from Marseilles, 1994*

*TREVOR STEVEN (Age 31)*

*Signed from Marseilles, 1993*

*IAN FERGUSON (Age 28)*

*Signed from St Mirren, 1988*

*IAN DURRANT (Age 29)*

*Signed from Glasgow United 1984*

*MARK HATELEY (Age 33)*

*Signed from Monaco 1990*

*BRIAN LAUDRUP (Age 27)*

*Signed from Fiorentina 1994*

*NEIL MURRAY (Age 22)*

*Signed from Rangers Amateurs*

*CHARLIE MILLER (Age 19)*

*Signed from Rangers BC 1992*







# Out for Old Firm debut

## The big INTERVIEW

ALBANIAN RUDI VATA

RUDI Vata spent most of this season playing reserve team football - but now looks set to finish it with the biggest high of all - by winning a place in the cup final side to face Airdrie at Hampden on May 27.

And today Rudi should at last make his Old Firm debut as his 40th first team appearance since joining Celtic in August 1992.

And the Albanian defender admits that things couldn't have turned out any better for him in the last few months of this campaign.

He said: "I hope that I will be playing in today's match and of course in the final.

"I think I've done alright in the games that I've played since coming into the team and would love the chance to play in the biggest game this season.

"I enjoyed playing in the reserves for most of this season, as the football was good, the team are of a high standard and the training with Frank Connor and Tom McAdam was great as well.

### Chance

"But obviously I was waiting for my first team chance and I was more than happy when I got it as everyone playing reserve team football wants to make the step up to the first team in the end.

"There is a different responsibility playing in the top team. Yes there is more pressure but you are playing with quality players and you have to lift yourself and that is enjoyable.

"I waited for a long time for the chance, and that is just what you have to do, you have to be professional, work hard and hopefully get your reward in the end.

### Interview: MERLE BROWN

"Now after being involved in some matches, I hope I can play in some of the important ones that are left.

"The cup final is so important for all of the players. We have to win it to learn how to believe in ourselves again.

"Then once we have won a trophy it will be like a stepping stone for bigger things.

**"I BELIEVE THAT IF WE DO, AND IF WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IN OURSELVES, THEN WE CAN GO ON AND WIN THE TITLE NEXT SEASON."**

Before the final though, Rudi is hoping to experience the special atmosphere of an Old Firm clash and be on the winning side against Rangers today.

And he said: "This is a very big game and I don't think it matters that Rangers have won the league already.

"It will always be a real battle and we have to make sure that we win this one.

"I am looking forward to it very much and hope that I can be involved in bringing some happiness back to the fans and everyone connected with the club, by being part of a winning side in the first game I play against Rangers."

Rudi has also enjoyed

**“ I believe if we win the cup and continue to believe in ourselves, we can go on to win the league next season ”**

international football this season with Albania's European Championship qualifying matches.

He said: "I have loved the internationals I've played even though we have not done that well and are more or less out of the qualifiers now.

"But we are a country in the middle of changes and there is hope there for the future with some very good players being brought together, so things should work out for us soon."

Rudi's contract with Celtic runs out at the end of this season and he still has to wait and find out if he has played the required amount of games to gain another work permit.

### Believe

But he isn't worrying about things, and was philosophical in his answer.

He said: "I just have to wait and find out what happens. I don't know exactly how it will turn out, but I am the kind of person who just likes to believe that things will happen if they are meant to and I will just continue to believe that and wait and see.

"Hopefully it will work in my favour and I will be able to stay with the club."

