



# MOTHERWELL



# CELTIC



2017/18 BETFRED CUP FINAL  
SUNDAY 26TH NOVEMBER 2017  
KICK-OFF 3:00PM  
HAMPDEN PARK

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY  
PROGRAMME / £5





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# WELCOME

On behalf of the Scottish Professional Football League, a very warm welcome to this afternoon's Betfred Cup Final at Hampden Park

**G**ood afternoon and welcome to the 2017/18 Betfred Cup Final between Motherwell and Celtic here at Hampden Park. We witnessed two entertaining and action-packed Betfred Cup semi-finals

claimed the iconic silverware in 1950/51. Celtic are appearing in their 32nd final and have won the trophy 16 times. They are the current Betfred Cup holders, beating Aberdeen 3-0

**"I HOPE EVERYONE IN ATTENDANCE AT HAMPDEN PARK ENJOYS THE EXPERIENCE TODAY. GOOD LUCK TO BOTH MOTHERWELL AND CELTIC"**

at the National Stadium last month and the stage is set for another fantastic occasion this afternoon, with the first trophy of 2017/18 up for grabs.

This is the 72nd season of a competition that began in 1946/47 and the second year of the revamped tournament backed by sponsor Betfred and our broadcast partner BT Sport. We are very grateful to both for their continued support and for the enthusiasm and passion they show for Scottish football.

Motherwell have already knocked out Ross County, Aberdeen and Rangers to reach this stage for the first time since 2004/05 and began their 2017/18 Betfred Cup campaign on this very ground when they beat Queen's Park 5-1 in Group F back on 15 July. The Steelmen are featuring in their fourth League Cup final and are bidding to lift the trophy for the second time – having previously

here 12 months ago, and are aiming to retain the trophy for the first time since 2000/01. Brendan Rodgers' side have accounted for Kilmarnock, Dundee and Hibernian en route to today's final and recently set a new British record of 63, now 64, domestic games without defeat, surpassing a landmark Celtic themselves set between 1915 and 1917.

I would like to thank Peter Dallas and his staff at Hampden Park for their assistance in staging this afternoon's showpiece game, which will be watched in the stadium by a crowd of around 50,000. Cup finals are days to remember – I hope everyone in attendance enjoys the experience and good luck to both Motherwell and Celtic.

Best wishes,

**Neil Doncaster**, SPFL Chief Executive



## FROM OUR SPONSOR

A very warm welcome to Hampden Park for the 2017 Betfred Cup Final.

I am really looking forward to what should be a terrific game with both teams progressing from two very entertaining semi-finals.

Celtic come here today looking not only to retain the trophy for the first time since 2000/01, but also to extend their amazing 64-game unbeaten domestic run and I have huge admiration for Brendan Rodgers for steering Celtic through this record-breaking sequence.

Stephen Robinson and his Motherwell side arrive here at Hampden today looking to win the trophy for the first time since 1950 and much praise must go to Robinson having not only secured Motherwell's Premiership status, but also reaching a major final after only eight months in charge.

Best of luck to both managers and their players and also to today's match referee Craig Thomson and his officials.

2017 has certainly been a memorable year for Betfred as we have been celebrating our 50th birthday. I certainly never dared dream that, when opening that first shop in Salford back in 1967, it would take me on such a fantastic journey that would see me standing here at Hampden Park handing this iconic trophy over to the winning skipper.

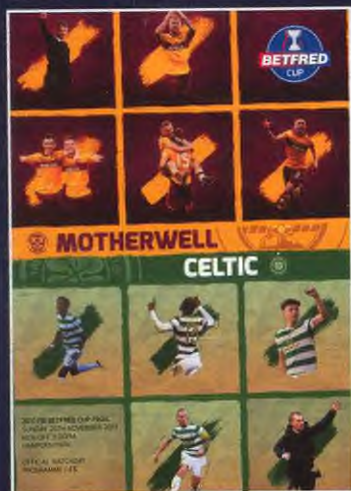
The Betfred Cup has enjoyed terrific exposure once again this year and the BT Sport team deserve a special mention for their outstanding coverage of the competition.

As always a big thanks to all of the journalists, both local and national, who are to be commended for the standard and passion of their coverage both on screen and in print. Thanks to you guys, the competition's popularity continues to flourish in its latest format.

Thanks also to all of the staff at the SPFL whose continued commitment and enthusiasm makes them a pleasure to deal with.

Back to this afternoon and, whether the trophy eventually bears claret and amber ribbons or green and white, let's hope we all look back on a terrific final where once again football has been the real winner.

*Neil Doncaster*



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## UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

The Scottish Professional Football League will not tolerate unacceptable conduct at Hampden Park or any of the stadiums where its matches are played.

Unacceptable conduct is conduct which is violent or disorderly. Violent conduct includes any actual, attempted or threatened physical violence against any person, or intentional damage to property.

Disorderly conduct includes: Conduct which stirs up or sustains, or is likely or is designed to stir up or sustain, hatred or ill will against or towards individuals or groups of people based on their membership of presumed membership of the following categories:

- Gender, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin

- Membership, or presumed membership, of a religious group or of a social or cultural group with perceived religious affiliation
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity
- Disability

Or against an individual who is or is presumed to be a member of such group using threatening, abusive or insulting words or conduct; displaying writing or any other thing which is threatening, abusive or insulting; using words or conduct or displaying any writing or other thing which indicates support for, or affiliation to, or celebration of, or opposition to an organisation or group proscribed in terms of the Terrorism Act 2000.

"Presumed" above means presumed by the person or

persons engaged in the conduct.

"Religious group" above means a group of persons defined by reference to their religious belief or lack of religious belief, membership of or adherence to a church or religious organisation, support for the culture and traditions of a church or religious organisation and/or participation in activities associated with such a culture or such traditions.

"Transgender identity" means any one or more of transvestism, transsexualism, inter-sexuality or change of gender.

"Disability" means physical or mental impairment of any kind.

Any person engaging in unacceptable conduct may be subject to removal from the Stadium, report to the police and possible criminal proceedings.

# SCENESETTER

Hampden Park will witness a little bit of Scottish football history this afternoon as Celtic and Motherwell meet in the final of this competition for the very first time...

**B**rendan Rodgers' Celtic side arrive on the south side of Glasgow as strong favourites to lift the Betfred Cup for the second year in a row and therefore retain the silverware for the first time since 2000/01, when Martin O'Neill's men clinched the first leg of the Treble thanks to a Henrik Larsson hat-trick, 12 months after Kenny Dalglish had led the Hoops to victory over Aberdeen.

Celtic defeated the Dons 3-0 here last November to win the 100th trophy in their history and they have since added two more under former Liverpool boss Rodgers, who has yet to taste defeat in a domestic match. The unbroken sequence now stands at 64 games following the 1-0 victory in Dingwall last weekend thanks to a sumptuous free-kick from Leigh Griffiths. The first win of the run was a 7-0 win against Motherwell at Parkhead in Ronny Della's final fixture in charge – and Celtic surpassed their own British record set from 1915-17 with an emphatic win at McDiarmid Park on November 4.

Sooner or later, that remarkable run will come to an end but we probably said the same a year ago and Celtic have been relentless under Rodgers. They rattled in 13 goals against Kilmarnock, Dundee and Hibernian en route to today's showpiece occasion and their fans will expect them to be celebrating a 17th success in this competition under the Hampden floodlights.

Motherwell have won this tournament just once, upsetting the odds to claim a 3-0 victory in 1950/51 over Hibernian – who won the league by a distance that season. The Steelmen are eyeing another shock in what is their fourth League Cup final appearance and the first since 2004/05, when they lost heavily to Rangers.

Stephen Robinson's side have saved some of their best performances this

season for the Betfred Cup. They were hugely impressive in dismantling Aberdeen 3-0 in their quarter-final victory at Fir Park and produced another excellent display here five weeks ago to beat Rangers 2-0 thanks to a double from Louis Moutl. It was that man Moutl who scored both goals in the notable 2-0 victory against Aberdeen at Pittodrie last weekend.

Perhaps not too many of the 1,590 supporters who attended their Betfred Cup opener against Queen's Park here on Saturday 15 July expected to be returning for the final but Well have been an impressive unit this season and an eighth win in 10 games against Dundee at the end of October

**“CELTIC ARE AIMING TO RETAIN THE BETFRED CUP WHILE MOTHERWELL ARE SEEKING THEIR FIRST SUCCESS SINCE 1950”**

lifted them as high as third in the Ladbrokes Premiership.

As Motherwell chase their first major honour since that memorable May day in 1991 when they defeated Dundee United in a truly epic Scottish Cup Final they will note that this competition has produced some unexpected winners in recent years, with Kilmarnock, St Mirren and Ross County all getting their hands on the trophy for the first time.

Such has been the high level of Celtic's play, they have suffered relatively few scares during their 18-month unbeaten streak but Motherwell had them worried at Fir Park a year ago when they led 2-0 at

the break and 3-2 with 19 minutes left before Stuart Armstrong equalised and Tom Rogic conjured up a superb last-minute winner to settle a captivating contest in Celtic's favour.

The teams last crossed paths in February of this year when first-half goals from Moussa Dembele (penalty) and James Forrest earned Celtic a 2-0 victory at Parkhead. Their line-up has not changed greatly in the past nine months but the majority of the Motherwell side have moved on, or retired from playing in the case of assistant manager Keith Lasley and coach Stephen McManus. Of the 11 starters that afternoon, only Cadden and Moutl are likely to feature today.

A quirk of the fixture list means this is the first of three meetings between the teams in seven days. They go head to head in Lanarkshire on Wednesday night in a match rearranged from Betfred Cup semi-final weekend then it is Celtic Park on Saturday in a scheduled Premiership fixture. Celtic have won the past six encounters but Motherwell enjoyed a 2-1 success in the East End of Glasgow in December 2015 and can point to back-to-back home wins in the latter part of 2012/13.

Celtic have so many attacking threats plus options aplenty on the bench to change things and they have not failed to score in a domestic match since a 0-0 draw at Dens Park in early April 2016. It will take some effort from Motherwell to shut them out but the Steelmen are not without attacking menace themselves and it all adds up to a fascinating encounter.

Come late afternoon, Celtic will have stretched that unbeaten sequence to 65 matches, collected their fourth trophy in a year and sealed the first leg of potential back-to-back Trebles or Motherwell will be celebrating one of the greatest days in their history.