



ABERDEEN VS CELTIC



2016/17 BETFRED CUP FINAL
SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER, 2016
KICK-OFF 3PM
HAMPDEN PARK

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY
PROGRAMME / £5



OH AH TUBULAR



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FROM OUR SPONSOR

Firstly, a very warm welcome to Hampden Park for this year's Betfred Cup final. Today sees the culmination of what has undoubtedly been a terrific tournament, and a big thanks to all at the Scottish Professional Football League and also the clubs, players and fans who have helped to make this an enjoyable and successful first year for Betfred.

I must reiterate my comments made prior to the semi-finals that whilst 'experimental' during the group stage I have loved the fact that, in addition to the traditional three points for a win and one point for a draw, drawn matches had the added excitement of going straight to a penalty shoot-out for that added bonus point. Life is all about trying different things, some work and some don't but we felt the new format was a real winner and the shoot-out added significantly to the drama of some of the early matches. Hopefully you will all agree and it will be more of the same for 2017.

That said, we must also respect the tradition and today's game is a very fitting finale, with two true heavyweights of the Scottish game battling to add to their recent successes in this competition.

Whilst today will no doubt be memorable as it is my first cup final here at the National Stadium I must confess that the Betfred Cup of 2016 will also remain long in the memory with me for another reason - it produced the most amazing bet I have taken in my 50 years as a bookmaker.

Back in August, punter Steve Sales placed a £1.40 Patent (that's 20p 'singles, doubles and a treble') on three Betfred Cup games - Dundee to beat Forfar Athletic, Inverness Caley Thistle to beat Arbroath and Ross County to beat Cove Rangers.

So what is so amazing about that you may ask? Well, Steve predicted that all three games would finish 7-0 and they did!!! He walked away with a cool £57,990.20! Steve himself later described the bet as ridiculous and that he is certainly 'no expert' when it comes to football but thought it may just be his lucky day!

Steve recently returned from a luxury trip to Mexico with his pals and it is a pleasure to welcome him here to Hampden today as our guest. Whilst he is keeping his 'predictions' close to his chest, he tells me he is 'confident that there will be a few goals'. Steve is a classic example of how a 'fun' bet of a few pounds can produce life-changing enjoyment. Enjoy the game Steve.

2016 has certainly been a memorable year for Betfred as we have recently added 300-plus shops to our retail estate, which includes nearly 40 extra up here in Scotland, and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new staff who will be joining us over the coming months. Also, our online business Betfred.com continues to flourish, all of which helps Betfred to become involved in these great sponsorships such as the Betfred Cup.

Back to this afternoon, it will be a great honour to be handing over the iconic trophy to the winning captain today and whether the trophy bears red ribbons or green ribbons let's hope we all look back on a terrific final where once again football has been the real winner.

Enjoy the final and a big thank you to everyone for your support for this year's Betfred Cup.



SPFL WELCOME

Good afternoon and welcome to this afternoon's Betfred Cup final between Aberdeen and Celtic, which promises to be one of the highlights of the Scottish football season.

This is the conclusion of the 71st Scottish League Cup competition and the first occasion since 1998/99 - when Rangers defeated St Johnstone at Celtic Park - that the final has been played before the turn of the year.

Remarkably, the last six seasons have produced six different winners, with Ross County the current holders of the iconic silverware after beating Hibernian 2-1 at the National Stadium back in March.

Rangers, Kilmarnock and St Mirren have also got their hands on the trophy during that period, as, of course, have both today's finalists. Aberdeen won the League Cup for the sixth time in March 2014 - beating Inverness Caledonian Thistle on penalties after a 0-0 draw at Parkhead - while 12 months later Celtic defeated Dundee United 2-0 here at Hampden Park to clinch this prize for the 15th time.

Aberdeen progressed to their 14th League Cup final with a 2-0 win over Championship side Morton and, five weeks ago today, Celtic defeated Rangers 1-0 in the second semi-final to reach their 31st League Cup final.

Around 50,000 fans will be in attendance for today's showpiece, with many more watching at home via the excellent coverage provided by BT Sport, who are in year one of a four-year deal to cover the League Cup. This is their 13th live Betfred Cup tie of 2016/17 and their passion for Scottish football is there for all to see.

I would also like to thank Betfred for their backing of a competition that most agree has been revitalised by the changes made for this season. Today's match promises to be a fascinating encounter between the teams currently first and second in the Premiership. The League Cup has served up some thrilling finals down the years and I'm sure we are in for another exciting match this afternoon.

I am acutely aware of the time, effort and money that supporters across the country put in to follow their teams. Cup finals are special occasions so, whether you are backing Aberdeen or Celtic, enjoy the game and the celebrations that will follow.

Best wishes

Neil Doncaster
SPFL Chief Executive



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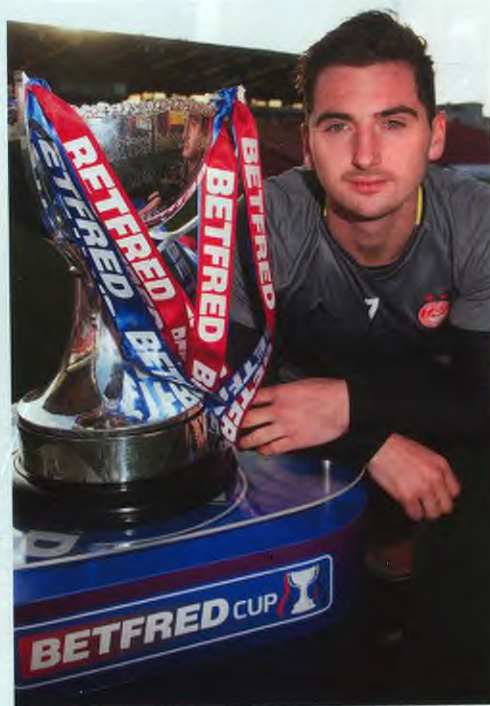
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IT'S HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The Hampden experience



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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.

UP FOR THE CUP

The 71st Scottish League Cup final promises to be a fascinating encounter between Premiership leaders Celtic and second-placed Aberdeen

There is nothing quite like the build-up to a big game. For the fans of Aberdeen and Celtic this morning there will have been that heady mix of excitement, hope and fear that afflicts all supporters on a matchday, never mind one with a trophy waiting at the end of it.

One of the many great beauties of football is that you never know what is going to happen on any given day. Will your best players perform as you expect? What if big chances are missed? Might a mistake cost you the cup? It is rarely stress-free watching for those who invest so much in their teams. Football matters and today will be an occasion to cherish for either Aberdeen or Celtic.

Remarkably, the last six seasons have produced six different winners of the League Cup but that sequence of sharing will end on a late autumn afternoon at the National Stadium, in the first decider to be played before the turn of the year since 1998/99.

Celtic lifted the trophy for the 15th time in 2014/15, when they beat Dundee United 2-0, while 12 months earlier Aberdeen had claimed the iconic silverware for the sixth time thanks to a penalty shoot-out triumph against Inverness Caley Thistle at Parkhead.

Under the stewardship of the legendary Jock Stein, Celtic won this trophy five years in a row during the 1960s but overall they have lost as many finals as they have won – a 15-15 record – and they have been on the end of some shock results in the past.

Brendan Rodgers' side are favourites to lift the cup today. They have a 10-point cushion at the summit of the Premiership, with a game in hand, and have failed to win only one domestic match this season – the 2-2 draw at

Inverness back in September – beating Motherwell, Alloa Athletic and Rangers to reach this stage. Celtic supporters will be dreaming of a Treble, last achieved in Martin O'Neill's first season as manager in 2000/01, and victory today would be a big step in that direction.

In Moussa Dembele, Celtic have the country's joint top scorer with 16 goals in all competitions and Scott Sinclair tops the Premiership charts with nine league goals. Their fast-paced attacking football has

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caught the eye but the leaders have also been strong defensively. In fact, you have to go back to September 24 for the last goal conceded in a domestic match, when Kilmarnock's Souleymane Coulibaly lashed a stunning 40-yarder past Dorus de Vries. Craig Gordon replaced the injured Dutchman at half-time that day and has only been beaten in Champions League ties since then.

The Hoops go into the game on the back of a 1-0 win at Kilmarnock a week past Friday, when Stuart Armstrong scored the only goal, but they were beaten 2-0 by Barcelona on Wednesday night.

Aberdeen's most recent outing brought an impressive 3-1 success at Inverness last Saturday and Derek McInnes' men are in good shape, with eight wins in the last 10 games. They have knocked out Ayr United, St Johnstone and Morton to reach their 14th League Cup final and

would love to take the trophy back to Pittodrie for a seventh time.

McInnes has done a wonderful job in the North East and guided the Dons to glory against Caley Thistle in this competition in March 2014 to end a 19-year wait for silverware.

Aberdeen have lost only three Premiership matches this season – two to Celtic and one to Hamilton Accies – and have a strong side. Adam Rooney has been a key player in this season's competition, scoring against St Johnstone and Morton, on-loan Norwich City winger James Maddison is capable of something special and Graeme Shinnie always impresses, whether in midfield or at left-back. With Joe Lewis one of the most capable keepers in the country and skipper Ryan Jack back after injury, Aberdeen fans will feel their side are capable of upsetting the odds.

Those of a red and white persuasion may also point to the fact the last three Scottish Cup final meetings all went their way. In 1990 Brian Irvine settled an epic penalty shoot-out, in 1984 Mark McGhee's extra-time goal won the day and in 1970 Derek 'cup tie' McKay was the hero in the same season that Celtic reached their second European Cup final.

Surprisingly, this is only the third League Cup final between Aberdeen and Celtic. Ally MacLeod led the Dons to glory in 1976/77, 2-1 after extra time, and Kenny Dalglish was at the helm when the Parkhead men beat Ebbe Skovdahl's 2-0 side in 1999/00.

Both clubs have a rich history in this competition – stars like Graham Leggat, Davie Robb, Paul Mason and Eric Black have made headlines for Aberdeen while Billy McPhail, Bobby Lennox, Billy McNeill, Dixie Deans and Henrik Larsson are among Celtic's League Cup legends. Who will emerge as the hero this afternoon?