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SAINTS

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Inside this week

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- **THE GREAT SAINTS - BOBBY DAVIDSON**
- **FACE TO FACE - WITH PHILIP SCOTT**
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PA SPORT: Match Reports and Previews Tuesday and Friday

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EDITORIAL

Today, we welcome Celtic Football Club for the second time in five days. They are, as always, welcome guests. The last time St Johnstone were in the Premier Division we enjoyed some really great matches against Celtic, sometimes winning, sometimes losing, but invariably after seeing a very exciting ninety minutes of action. Who will forget, in December 1990, the 'agony' of seeing Saints being two goals up after only a few minutes and wondering how we could hold out for the rest of the match. In the event, we saw a fantastic game of all-out attacking football from both sides, ending in a famous 3 - 2 victory for Saints. At the end of that season, Celtic turned the tables, with a similar score after another excellent match. The famous team from the east-end of Glasgow has a reputation for entertaining, attacking football and, whatever the result, we can all hope that today's match is as good as most of those from the early 1990's.

In the last issue, we stated that the programme was being produced prior to our game against Motherwell and consequently we wouldn't know whether we would be facing Celtic in the Coca-Cola tie in a good frame of mind or not. Well, as we all know, Celtic had an off day last weekend, while Saints went to the top of the Premier Division, albeit only for a short time. Today's programme suffers in a similar way. We go to press before the result of the Coca-Cola game is known, and hence we again do not know whether the Saints' team will be buoyed up by another good result. However, to complicate things, a win in the Coca-Cola Cup may, perversely, make things more difficult for Tuesday's victors. Whoever has lost will be more determined to make amends today. Celtic are a proud club and have every reason to be so. They have not had the best start to their League campaign. With the quality of players at Wim Jansen's disposal, they must surely turn the corner sooner rather than later, but hopefully, from the Perth point of view, that particular manoeuvre will not begin today. AB/HLG



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CELTIC

One of the problems of having to produce two Saints v Celtic programmes in one week is that you cannot really stick all the names in again in the 'away teams' page. Instead, we asked a tame Celtic supporter to give us his thoughts on the Bhoys' prospects. So, without further ado, here is...

What a difference a year makes!

As Celtic gear up for another assault on the Premier Division, there are more new faces than a seventies talent show, 'Nine in a row' is now history and the prospect of a record-breaking tenth win by our arch rivals is gripping the east end of Glasgow.

The close season didn't go as well as many Celtic fans hoped for, with the departure of 'life-long fan' Tommy Burns. After a relatively short time in control of the team, Burns was deemed not to be what was required. It must be said that some tactical naivety and some unfortunate public utterances did not help his cause.

Meanwhile, Celtic's foreign legion were heard singing, "should I stay or should I go?" by every erstwhile journalist willing to pay the asking price (usually a trip to Italy or Portugal). Paulo di Canio seemed in danger of being a fleeting legend and top scorer Jorge Cadete fell victim to depression - just like most Celtic supporters over the summer. It is an unenviable fact that Celtic have produced the league's top scorer for two

consecutive seasons and then lost them within a year. Equally importantly, in my eyes, they have also lost the talents of Paul McStay, who has often been the team's inspiration over many years.

Off the field, as we all know, there have been lots of changes. It is still too early to comment on how these will all affect the

Feyenoord but so far he looks a quality buy and has shown some inventive play as he tries to settle down with his new team-mates.

In many people's opinion, the defence was the weakest part of last season's team and Stephane Maye has arrived after a career with Auxerre and PSG to help bolster things at the back. He

was a member of the PSG team which was so impressive against Celtic in Europe a few seasons ago.

The end of di Canio meant the beginning of Blinker. Regi Blinker had not spent long at Sheffield Wednesday, but he showed enough to suggest that his particular brand of wing magic could enthral Celtic fans brought up on a tradition of excellent wingers.

In between the uprigths, Jonathon Gould is currently first choice keeper. Originally brought from Bradford City to provide cover, Jonathon did well enough against Austria's FC Tirol to justify being kept in the side.

The rest of the side is much as last year, but without our absent foreign friends. There seems to be a good chance that West Ham's Mark Reiper and Sporting Lisbon's Paulo Alves may be making tracks for Parkhead. Whoever comes, all we, the fans ask is four victories over Rangers and all the silverware on offer - not much I know!

Thanks to Stephen Davis for the words and to Andrew Smith for the photograph.



Tommy Johnson

club.

Scottish internationalists Darren Jackson and Craig Burley have joined forces at Celtic Park, linking up with several other, new international players. Jackson's introduction hasn't resulted in many goals yet, but Burley looks an effective buy. His time with what is clearly a very good Chelsea team will stand him in good stead.

Henrik Larsson had to resolve contract difficulties with

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Saints Soccer Centres

Now that the summer school holidays are over and all our budding young stars are back to "English and Maths and all that", there is the chance to enjoy football fun and games at our series of Soccer Centres throughout Perth and Kinross.

Our very popular centre at McDiarmid (not you Roddy!) was due to re-start this morning with sessions at 9.30am, 10.30am and 11.30am. Any boy or girl of school age up to First Year secondary level can attend and the idea is that everyone has fun and enjoys their game, no matter what standard, and without the added pressures of 'win at all costs' situations. Over 240 came along to our sessions in the Spring and we are hoping for a similar turnout between now and November.

Kids from outwith Perth are more than welcome at McDiarmid Park each Saturday, however they may wish to attend their local centres, which are as follows:

Tuesdays: Almondbank 5.30pm, Crieff 6.00pm

Wednesdays: Auchterarder 4.30pm, Pitlochry 4.45pm

Thursdays: Blairgowrie 5.00pm, Kinross 6.15pm and 7.30pm

Scotland v Belarus Complimentaries

We have had a good response to our offer of complimentary tickets for the Scotland v Belarus U-21 international at McDiarmid Park on Friday, 5th September, KO, 7.30pm. We are hoping that some of the St Johnstone

young stars might be in the Scotland line-up, so it should be a good night to look forward to.

Over 1,000 tickets are already earmarked for local youth or school groups. Although the closing date for applications was yesterday, there are still more available provided your group is organised with 1 adult for every 5 juveniles (U-16). If you want more details, call McDiarmid Park on 01738 626961.

BT Football for Disabled Groups

Our programme of football sessions for people with learning difficulties resumes at McDiarmid Park next Wednesday afternoon at 1.30pm, and will continue until the school holidays in October.

We will be taking some of our regulars to Broadwood Stadium in Cumbernauld on Thursday 18th September, when similar groups from around the country will meet for a Football Festival which will include skill practices and games.

Saints Soccer Sevens

Fixtures in our Saints Soccer Sevens, which are designed for boys and girls born between 1984 and 1987, start again on Monday on the all-weather pitch at the stadium.

These 7-a-side games have been very popular and we are looking forward to some more entertaining contests between now and the 27th of October.

For more information on any Community Event, please call Atholl Henderson at McDiarmid Park - 01738 626961.

JUNIOR SAINTS

News of the 1997-98 programme of events will be available to members very soon and will include the usual bus trips, discos, quizzes etc.

Membership for this season has already exceeded last year's total and everyone should now have received their membership cards and Junior Rooster-Hats (but be careful your Dad doesn't nick it as our editor says they are dead ace and brill).

Throughout this season, we have decided to get the players to answer some of the questions posed by Junior Saints on their application forms. We start with Allan Preston.

Q. What team are you most looking forward to playing against in the Premier League?

A. Hearts

Q. What do you feel before the start of a game?

A. Nervous but confident

Q. What team would you like to play apart from Saints?

A. Juventus

Q. Why is your nickname Biscuits?

A. That's a secret!

Q. What's your most embar-

assing football moment?

A. Scoring an own goal v Raith Rovers

Q. What is the biggest thrill you've had in your football career?

A. Playing for the team I supported as a boy.

Q. What is your favourite hobby outwith football?

A. Golf

Match Mascots

Today's mascots have a lot in common. Both Lisa and John think the best game they've seen was the 7 - 2 hammering of Dundee last New Year and they both think David Beckham's goal for Man Utd against Wimbledon was the best they've seen. They both rate football as their favourite hobby, followed by Ice Skating and Dancing in Lisa's case and Tennis and Swimming in John's. Sporting TV shows are also popular, with Lisa plumping for 'Question of Sport' and John going for 'SportsScene'. John would like to be a footballer when he leaves school, but Lisa wants to be a Vet, or Veterinary Nurse.



Lisa Gowrie

John Campbell



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JIM'S BIT

Another week of national gum-gnashing is over. Scotland has a reputation for poor dental care and this has been compounded in football circles by the annual molar grinding contest which follows our teams' late summer sojourn into European territory.

As many have said in the last few days, all our teams in Europe are at 'half-time' in their ties. However, they all have to recover from a poor 'first half' performance to be in the draw for the next round. There is no doubt who were the poorest performers of all. I must confess to showing off my wallies to all and sundry as I watched Rangers disintegrate in the (proper) second half of their game against IFK Gothenberg.

I have a lot of admiration for the Swedish approach to sport. They have succeeded in tennis, golf, football and many other arenas over the years and in each case this has been done by developing the skills and attitudes of their young people. Their best football side contains few, if any, foreign national and for many years they have been a net exporter of players. Does this remind you of any country of not so many years ago...? For some years Geoff Brown has argued that clubs like St Johnstone cannot afford to be net buyers in the transfer market but rather they must seek to develop their own youthful talent and become net sellers. The same argument applies nationally in countries such as Scotland and Sweden.

The benefits are there for all to see. Lest we forget, Sweden finished third in the last World Cup. Gothenberg have as good a record in Europe as Rangers, or any other Scottish side. In the new Rangers' TV advert, David Murray says that if you buy a Rangers' strip then we will reinvest the money in players. In

other words, the punters' hard-earned cash may end up in the pocket of some overseas, possibly overpriced, player. Scottish football would be better off if every chairman copied those like Geoff Brown, and a few others, and invested in the young talent in this country. It may be unfair to criticise David Murray alone (Rangers are reportedly investing more in youth nowadays), and many others should be taking a long, hard look at themselves as well.

During the after-match phone-in on Radio Scotland, the 'disaster' which was Rangers' defeat by Gothenberg was relentlessly discussed. Chick Young castigated a caller for suggesting that the number of foreign players in Scotland should be restricted. "Which Scottish players are as good as the foreigners Rangers have brought in?" wondered Mr Young. Is it coincidence that Rangers' best recent run in Europe came with a largely British team?

Lottery funding will soon provide a British Academy of Sport. I don't see this being much use to Scotland and the government is suggesting that 'commercial' sports such as football, rugby and cricket, will be excluded. Therefore, any co-ordinated and structured approach to the development of young Scottish footballers will have to come from within. The SFA is active in promoting skills and development in the very young, but this is only scratching the surface in my opinion. The whole game and the attitudes of everyone involved (owners, administrators, players and fans) must change. If this doesn't happen the doom and gloom merchants will be able to say, "I told you so."

Football is a young man's game, or so the saying goes. Rumour has it that Allan