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Official Matchday Programme 1998/99



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MANAGER PROFILE
PAUL STURROCK

BANK OF SCOTLAND
SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE



v Celtic

Scottish Premier League,

Sunday May 23, 1999.

Kick-off 12.30pm



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PAUL STURROCK

Today, Celtic bring the curtain down on what has been a very frustrating and disappointing season.

No other words can be used to describe a campaign in which our continued presence in the SPL was only confirmed on the second last Saturday of the season.

I said at the very outset that staying up would be difficult and that, unfortunately, is exactly how it has proved to be.

One of my biggest personal disappointments has that over the seven months, for one reason or another, we never had a settled side.

To get consistency of results, you need a continuity of selection and, for one reason or another, that just never happened.

Perhaps the nearest we got to achieving that was at the start of the year when we did enjoy a reasonable run of results with a settled side.

However, the Scottish Cup came along and because of signing deadlines and

"One thing I can promise is that there will be big changes at this football club."

suspensions enforced changes in the side which broke that momentum. By now I had hoped to have had a clearer picture of what we would require in terms of new players for the future. Whilst avoiding the drop was the short term goal, the time that it has taken to achieve it has hampered the long term ambitions.

Had it happened earlier, we would have had more time to start looking for new players to strengthen the squad.

That was why last week, myself and Maurice Malpas, were away on scouting missions, but with so little of the season left, there is hardly any time in which to watch possible signing targets.

That in turn means that it may take a little bit longer to get the settled side with which I had hoped we could begin next season.

One thing I can promise is that there will be big changes at this football club.

Some will be made quicker than others, but you cannot hide the fact that the present squad of players has seen us battling against relegation for the last two seasons.

Our final home game of the season gives us a chance to improve on our disastrous home form, but as it is an end of season game, and with next term very much in my thoughts, I intend giving one or two of our youngsters an outing.

Obviously, with Celtic being our visitors, it is a big game, but it is time they were given a chance to show their paces as too many others have failed to make the most of their opportunities in the past.

Difficult as it will be, hopefully we can sign off this disappointing campaign with a victory to take into the short close season and make your summer holidays that bit more enjoyable.



DUNDEE United

DUNDEE UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

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UEFA Cup:
Runners-up: 1986-87

Scottish League Premier Division Champions:
1982-83

Division Two Champions:
1924-25, 1928-29;
Runners-up: 1930-31, 1959-60

Scottish Cup Winners:
1993-94

Runners-up:
1973-74, 1980-81, 1984-85, 1986-87,
1987-88, 1990-91

Scottish League Cup
Winners:

1979-80, 1980-81

Runners-up:
1981-82, 1984-85, 1997-98

Summer Cup
Runners-up: 1964-65

Scottish War-time Cup
Runners-up: 1937-40

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TANNADICE TOPICS

FAREWELL



In these days of freedom of contract, the end of a season almost inevitably means departures from the club.

Of the the players whose contracts are up, we know for a fact that Kjell Olofsson will be returning home to Norway. Although he may not have found the net quite so regularly this season, his contribution over the past two and a half years has been of major significance, being our top scorer for two of his three seasons at the club.

All told since making his debut against Hearts at Tannadice in October 1996, the strong running Swede has, before this afternoon, scored 46 goals in 118 appearances.

In his first season, his goals very much helped us secure third spot and a return to Europe whilst last season, they almost certainly saved us from relegation.

Our good wishes go to him and his family for the rest of his footballing and future career.

He will certainly not be forgotten.

Others whose contracts are up at the end of the season are Sieb Dijkstra, Erik Pedersen, Neil Duffy and Dale Gray, whilst Neil Murray and Brian McLaughlin's short term deals also expire.

WORST EVER

All season we have been bemoaning our poor home form.

It won't, therefore, come as a major surprise to learn that this season has been the

worst in the Club's history when it comes to winning matches at Tannadice. Not since 1931-32 when we were relegated from the First Division, have we fared so badly at home, but even then we managed four wins from our 19 games. In percentage terms we could actually better that the number of points taken that term, but only if we beat Celtic.

Irrespective of whether we do that or not, this season will unfortunately go into the record books as the one in which we achieved the fewest number of home wins ever. Both those were against Aberdeen with our last home win coming on the 20th February.

TYNECASTLE POSTSCRIPT

Last Saturday's 4-1 defeat at Tynecastle brought our heaviest defeat of the season. Perhaps, surprisingly, in view of the below par performances of late, it was the first time that we had conceded four goals in a league match since the last Saturday in December 1997 when we lost by the same score to Rangers at Ibrox.

Not much on the plus side to comment upon though our goal did mark John Eustace's first for the club and it was also Brian McLaughlin's debut in a tangerine jersey.

1974 RE-UNION DINNER

No doubt quite a number of you here this afternoon will be going home to make a quick change for tonight's Dundee United Business Club's Dinner which takes place in the Invercarse Hotel. The event which marks a reunion of the first ever United side to play in a Scottish Cup Final in 1974 has been a sell-out for weeks.

Amongst the members of the side who are travelling back to celebrate the event are Jack Copland, Andy Gray, Walter Smith and Archie Knox. Amongst those still based locally who are also attending are George Fleming, John Holt, Hamish

HAVE YOUR CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY AT TANNADICE PARK

McAlpine, Andy Rolland, Doug Smith and, of course, Jim McLean who was less than three years into his managerial reign when he guided the Club to its first Scottish Cup final.

It promises to be an evening high on nostalgia.

SEEKING PASTURES NEW

The end of the season has brought mixed fortunes for some Tannadice Old Boys.

Dave Bowman, one year after leaving Tannadice, has been freed by Raith Rovers. Although he has had the chance to coach, he still intends playing on and is on the look out for another club.

Meanwhile, Jim McNally has been released by Dundee and envisages playing only part-time football next season.

Another former Tannadice stalwart, Paul Hegarty, is also in limbo after being told that he wasn't being given the Aberdeen manager's job on a permanent basis. At the moment he is waiting to see if there is a job for him on the coaching staff after the new manager is appointed.

Finally, down south, Richard Gough, who along with Maurice Malpas is the only other member of our title winning side still playing, is set to stay in the Premiership. Although Nottingham Forest, his club this season, were relegated, Richard is teaming up again with Walter Smith, having signed for Everton who pipped West Ham for his signature.

SHORT BREAKS

For several of the Tannadice staff the close season is going to be brief indeed.

International calls are the reason.

Jason de Vos for example, will shortly head off to his native Canada who have four internationals coming up over the next two weeks.

First they meet Guatemala in Toronto and then play in a quadrangular tournament for the Canada Cup with Guatemala, Iran and Ecuador taking part.

Defensive colleague Darren Patterson is also on duty, being involved in a match in aid of funds for the Omagh bombing.

Lower down the international scale, next week Scotland is staging a triangular tournament at Under-21 level. These games are against the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in Inverness and Elgin. Again Maurice Malpas will be acting as assistant coach to Alex Smith, whilst Paul Gallacher and Steven Thompson have both been named in the playing squad. One of their colleagues will almost certainly be facing them, because David Worrell is in the Republic of Ireland squad.

And completing the litany of international call ups, two of the younger brigade are currently in Portugal as part of Ross Mathie's squad taking part in the "Under-17" Tournament of Lisbon. The two Tannadice representatives are Ian Murray and Blair Sturrock.

BACK SOON

This is the fourth weekend in May and as such the latest ever finish to a league season at Tannadice. And with the 1999-2000 season scheduled to start on the 31st July, it will be the shortest close season on record.

For the players it means an early start to pre-season training and they'll report back on June 28th, just five short weeks away.

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