

Match Magazine

70^P



DUNDEE

FOOTBALL CLUB PLC



DENS PARK STADIUM · DUNDEE



**THE B&Q
LEAGUE**

DUNDEE v CELTIC (PREMIER DIVISION)
SATURDAY, 24th SEPTEMBER, 1988 · KICK-OFF 3.00 p.m.

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DAVE SMITH

After all these years writing programme notes I'm never sure how many fans take the trouble to read them.

To those who do, can I say this: we will need time to be great again, not just to improve slightly! A lot of battles will be lost. People will not really understand the job facing Angus Cook and myself. Results (sometimes not deservedly gained) cover a multitude of sins and believe me this club has a long way to go. But if hard graft has anything to do with it, then we will succeed. People like knocking you when you're down, but the 'real' supporter (and I've talked to many of you — even my 'chippie' down in Carnoustie) knows and understands we will need time.

Many thanks to all the fans who have written letters. We all have our opinions about other players and I appreciate the list of players, supporters have recommended to me. It shows you really care! So thank you Robert Johnston of Downfield and Janet Clark of Fintry. I agree Janet "a couple of players would certainly help strengthen the squad". Also to David Cook of Edinburgh for your vital and staunch support — your serious comments have been noted. Finally, to Elaine Gray of Midlothian for your best wishes.

At this moment of time I'm not sure



that there will be any 'new faces' for today. If there are, give them your vital support, if not give 'our team of the day' your tremendous support. It will be needed today. Whatever results suggest, Celtic are always a force to be reckoned with, before, now and after. Your support therefore is essential!

DAVE



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Chairman's View . . .

At this time of writing, not long after our return journey from Douglas Park, Hamilton where we unfortunately were beaten by a better Accies team on the day, the disappointment and frustration felt by all the club is now in the past.

We now welcome a much bigger challenge in the name of Glasgow Celtic, who like ourselves, have made a less than auspicious start to the league campaign. However I do not subscribe to the theory that five games out of thirty six gives a true picture in determining the future at Dens Park Stadium.

In business I have personally often found myself swimming against the tide and have always been able to bounce back. I'm sure at times like this strength of character will be displayed and our team will regain the form we all know they are capable of.

Although I do concede we do need to strengthen the playing staff, the manager is actively scouring the market place in an effort to bring the type of player he feels necessary to add an extra dimension to our squad.

Please be patient with your support through this period and I can think of no better way for



the players to reward you than a victory today, with your vocal backing.

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WELCOME TO JOHN BLACKLEY

Although John Blackley has been with the club for almost two weeks now, this is the first opportunity we have had of welcoming our new assistant manager to Dens Park.

John's appointment followed a dispute with Cowdenbeath, his previous club, but a financial settlement over John's three year contract with the Central Park club resolved the dispute.

John Blackley began his career with Hibs after signing for the Easter Road club from Gairloch United in September 1965. He spent a year farmed out to Bo'ness United, but then began a long and distinguished career with the Easter Road club. Ironically, he made his first team debut in a 2-0 win over Dundee in March 1968. From then on he became a regular in the Hibs side and won U-21 and League honours. Season 72/3 was a milestone in John's career as the fine Hibs side of the early seventies won the League Cup and the Dryburgh Cup.

Full international honours followed and John gained caps against Czechoslovakia, England, Belgium and one against Zaire in the 1974 World Cup Finals. Further caps came John's way against Switzerland, Wales and Sweden. In 1978, however, he was transferred to Newcastle United for £100,000 after 424 appearances for the Club.



as a player with
Hibernian

From Newcastle United, John moved to Preston North End, before his return to Scotland as Player Manager with Hamilton Accies in October 1982.

At the start of season 1983/84 he returned to Easter Road as Assistant Manager to Pat Stanton. I doubt if he visualised that he would be resuming his playing career, let alone making another 16 appearances that campaign. In September 1984, John was appointed manager at Easter Road after Pat Stanton's resignation, and guided them to the Skol Cup Final and Scottish Cup semi-final in 1985-86, but a 21 year old association with Hibs sadly came to an end in November 1986 when he resigned from the post to be succeeded by Alex Miller.

Out of the game for the first time in twenty years, John could have been lost to football for all-time. However, his enthusiasm is second to none and in October 1987 he took over at Cowdenbeath as manager, after an earlier spell as assistant to Joe Craig at Central Park.



Now John has bounced back to a full-time job in football and John, for his part, said "it is a tremendous boost to be working with a club with the potential of Dundee".

Everyone at Dens extends the warmest of welcomes to a man with vast experience of the game on both sides of the border.



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In the summer Billy McNeill suggested that his Double-winning side would once again surprise people. He could not have guessed how cruelly that prediction would be borne out. He himself must have been surprised, and indeed dismayed, by Celtic's troubled performance in the opening matches of this campaign. In the whole of last season they lost only five matches. This time around things have been much shakier: the defeat by Aberdeen in the Premier League was their fifth of the new season.

EXHILARATION

It was perhaps to be expected that there would be some reaction to the euphoria of the Double. When McNeill returned to Celtic Park in 1987 expectations were low and the team was able to gather confidence and strength without being unduly troubled by publicity. How different things are now! It was always going to be difficult to quickly recreate the exhilaration which swept them to victory in the Cup Final yet the success they enjoyed created the unfortunate impression that triumph would now be a matter of routine for them. In reality, football has never been like that.

INJURIES

Some of Celtic's troubles have been the product of the kind of ill-fortune they mostly missed out on when winning the League and Cup. Bonner's back troubles ultimately required an operation and his replacements, Alan Rough and Ian Andrews, have themselves suffered injuries. Indeed, the former Leicester City man has recently played despite carrying a groin strain which left him unable to take kick-outs.

RECOVER HIS ZEST

The fitness of others has also been the subject of speculation. Paul McStay wore cycling shorts for the first match of the season to protect a muscular injury and Peter Grant is now resting after being forced to admit defeat in his attempt

to play his way through a mild case of hepatitis. Understandably, Chris Morris is also struggling to recover his zest after having much of his close season absorbed by Ireland's exciting but exhausting struggles in the European Nations' Championship.

DEFENCE HAS STRUGGLED

Celtic would be the first to admit, however, that bad performances cannot be blamed solely on bad luck. Aitken, Andrews and McCarthy have all gifted nightmarish goals to the opposition but Celtic's difficulties are the product of more than just individual defensive aberrations. They had not conceded a goal at Parkhead in 1988 until Henry Templeton scored for Ayr in the League Cup tie on 17 August but his strike came as no surprise. It has been clear throughout this season that the defence has struggled to recreate the understanding and effectiveness it previously enjoyed. Until they re-establish themselves as a team within a team Celtic will struggle.

HIGHEST STANDARDS

The form of individual players is, however, a mercurial substance. There were reminders recently of how suddenly mood and performance can be transformed. Paul McStay's play had been muted but his early goal against Norway turned out to be a shortcut back to his highest standards. By the end of that World Cup qualifier he was forcefully organising the game and harassing Norwegian defenders when they were in possession. On the same night, McCarthy and Morris were reported to be outstanding in the draw at Windsor Park. Celtic have every reason to hope for, and demand, a repeat of this form at club level.

MENACING

Celtic's season in any case, has not been entirely bleak. McNeill may have talked about players' obligations to their club following suggestions that McAvennie was unsettled but the striker's performances have been untroubled by all the

CELTIC FOOTBALL CLUB



speculation. He has looked menacing in every game and the turn and shot which put Celtic 2-0 up against Hamilton were of the highest calibre. So too was his opener at Ibrox though he may care to apply selective amnesia to the subsequent course of the match. Elsewhere in the side Rogan has been a dynamic and determined figure.

The damage of Celtic's season is far from being beyond repair. The League Cup is gone but even that defeat at Ibrox, still left them only five points off the pace with most of the campaign remaining and it is clear that McNeill expects Honved to be dealt with briskly at Celtic Park.

POSITIVE ATTEMPTS

It has to be remembered above all that these are still early days in the manager's second spell at Parkhead. On his return he spoke of his

concern about the structure of the club and the winning of the Double did not reduce the pertinence of those observations one iota. The conveyor belt which brought such extraordinary youngsters to the club in the 60s and 70s has worked only fitfully in the 80s. Although scarcely noted in the press, the recent appointment of ex-Morton manager Benny Rooney as Youth Development Officer is a positive attempt to remedy that problem.

CHALLENGING POSITION

Doubtless, Billy McNeill will continue to look for the new faces he was unable to sign during the summer but whatever the arrivals or departures no-one should bet against his side quickly re-establishing itself in a challenging position.



Andy Walker loses out in the tackle to Wes Saunders in the meeting with Celtic at Parkhead, which clinched the title for Celts last April. (Picture courtesy of D.C. Thomson).