



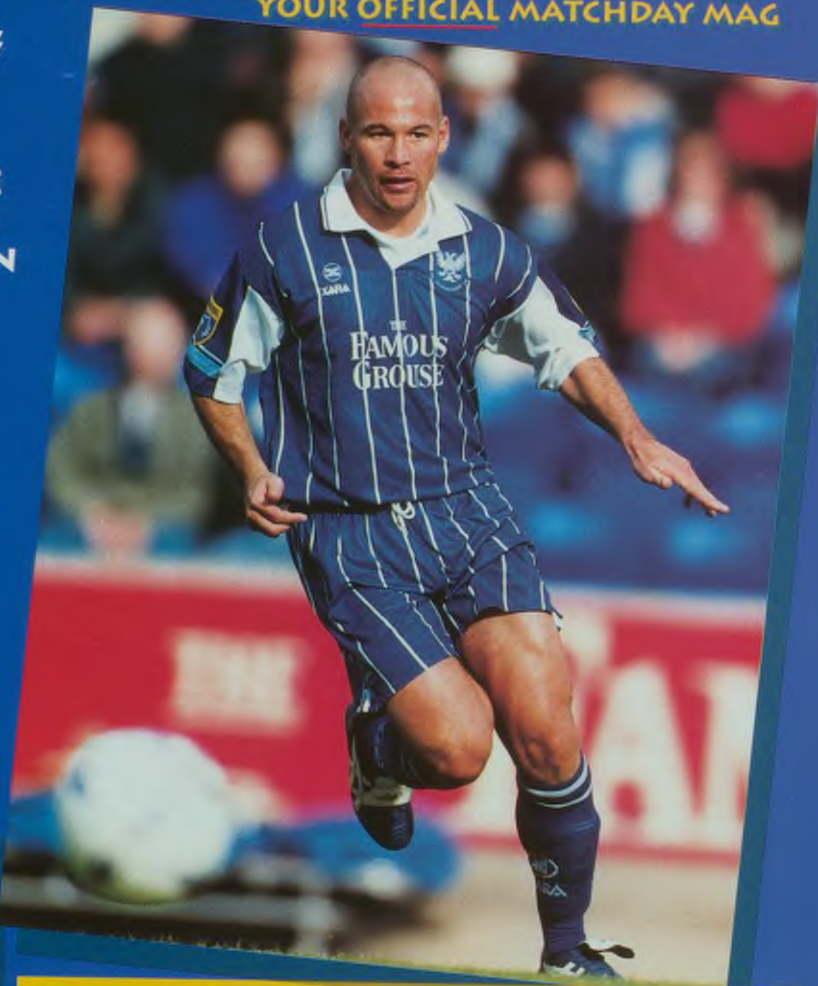
Super

SAINTS

YOUR OFFICIAL MATCHDAY MAG

Inside this week

- **FACE TO FACE WITH ALAN KERNAGHAN**
- **AROUND GROUNDS - PITTODRIE**
- **THE GREAT SAINTS - TOMMY CAIRNS**



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official match programme*

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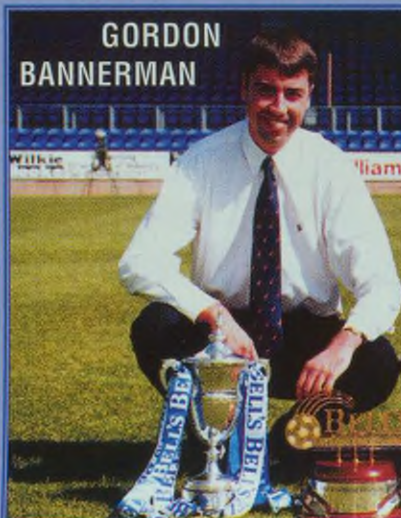
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PA SPORT: Match Reports and Previews Tuesday and Friday

SAINTSVIEWS

Well, what with Christmas deadlines at the printers and everything else (office parties etc), this programme is being written before the visit to Tannadice. Consequently, we don't know if Christmas was a time of rejoicing or misery.

What we do know is that the game against Kilmarnock was, to put it mildly, dire stuff. In the end justice was seen to be done and a draw was a reasonable result. However, if this is the kind of fare we are going to be served until the end of the season, then the sooner there is a Top Ten Breakaway the better.

One bright light from the Killie game was the form of new boy Tommy Wright. His pace, direct running and willingness to have a pop at goal whenever there was an opportunity bodes well for the future.

Most pundits expect that teams such as St Johnstone and Kilmarnock will feature

in many such games before the season is out. It is said that these are the matches which Saints have to win if we are to have any hope of staying up. Not for us the joy of drawing with Rangers! Yet the ability to take points off the Old Firm may be critical before next May. Other clubs, deemed fellow strugglers, have already drawn, or even won, against Celtic and Rangers. It would be nice if St Johnstone could emulate those such as Dunfermline, Aberdeen and Motherwell. Thus far, we have done better against the 'lesser' teams than against the Old Firm. If Saints really want to ensure that their stay in the Top Ten is permanent, then at least once a season we shall need a victory over Rangers and Celtic. Today would be a good day to start, but with Celtic playing well it will be far from easy. Happy Christmas!

St Johnstone FC

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Today's Squads

St Johnstone

Main
Griffin
Davidson
Dasovic
Kernaghan
Weir
Tosh
O'Neil
Kane
O'Boyle
Preston
Wright
Jenkinson
Grant

Celtic

Gould
Boyd
Mahe
McNamara
Rieper
Stubbs
Larsson
Burley
Lambert
Blinker
Donnelly
Brattbakk
Jackson
Wiegthorst

Today's referee is **Sandy Roy** with linesmen
Tom Brown and **Willie Weir**.



A
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CELTIC

Celtic last visited McDiarmid Park four months ago. Their first visit was in the Third Round of the Coca Cola Cup - a trophy they went on to win. This success has given further encouragement to the team after a sticky spell in the League. Celtic's League results were poor at the beginning of the season as Wim Jansen's new team took a while to gel. However, he has introduced new players slowly and this seems to be bearing fruit. For instance, Marc Rieper's introduction in September, after months of speculation, has made a difference to the defence where he has teamed up with Alan Stubbs, who has made an impressive recovery from injury.

The two players have formed a good bond and both players have also scored some important goals, such as the one that Marc scored in the Coca Cola Cup final which relaxed the team and opened the floodgates for more goals. Alan Stubbs has scored two goals this season but they were important ones: the first was an away goal in the UEFA Cup against Tyrol and the second was a last minute equaliser against Rangers in the League. Henrik Larsson has scored 14 goals but the club are still looking for an out and out striker and, hopefully, for Celtic, Harald Brattbakk will fill that gap. Certainly his performance in his debut against Hearts was impressive. Harald moved from Swedish team Rosenborg where he had scored 127

goals from 148 games, including the Champions League. Paul Lambert moved back to Scotland, after playing for Borussia Dortmund for 15 months, to play for Celtic in November. Good news for Celtic is the quick return to the first team of Darren Jackson who had to



Marc Rieper

undergo brain surgery four months ago and was not expected to be back in action before the New year. Morten Wieghorst has also come back into the reckoning with his excellent performance in the Coca Cola Cup final when he dominated the midfield. By the time you read this Morten should have a new contract with the club. Jonathon Gould has impressed the

Celtic supporters and given his career a jump-start with his performances so far this season. He has been rewarded for his shut-out displays by a new contract which will last until the next century.

Peter Grant left Celtic, after 15 years at Celtic, to move to Norwich City for £200,000 in August. Stuart Gray moved to Morton on a three month loan in October. A couple of months ago youth coach Danny Crainie left, followed by assistant general manager Davie Hay.

Fergus McCann plans to leave Celtic in 1999 but hopes to complete the stadium with a new west stand named after Jock Stein and increase the capacity to 60,000 by next summer. The new stadium would have the highest capacity in Britain for a club stadium.



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SAINTS SOCCER SNIPPETS

Ton Up For Jim Weir

Jim Weir made his 100th appearance for Saints against Kilmarnock two weeks ago. 'Whispering Ted' is one of the most popular players at Saints for ages and we look forward to recording his 200th appearance in our colours!

George moves up

As we mentioned in the last programme, George O'Boyle and Roddy Grant had reached joint

sixth place in the all-time Saints' scorers list.

George's penalty against Kilmarnock takes him into sole ownership of the sixth spot (unless Roddy has done anything sensational at Tannadice).

And the moral is...

Those of you who were at the last home match, against Kilmarnock, will have seen debutant Tommy Wright being booked for allegedly tackling a dive when tackled

by Gus McPherson. Our spy on the park tells us that the two players were actually laughing together about the incident afterwards. Apparently, McPherson, fearing a booking for his initial, robust challenge on Wright, stayed down after the tackle, hoping to avoid a booking himself. Much to his amazement, it was Wright's name which was recorded in the Ref's wee black book!

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COMMUNITY NEWS

1998 Coach Education Programme

E (EARLY TOUCHES) CERTIFICATE COURSE

Course outline

This course is designed to assist anyone, 16 years of age and over, who works with children aged 5 to 12 years in a football, physical education or activity context.

Course Content

- 1) a 6 hour practical session £15
- 2) a 2 hour Working with Children Module £10
- 3) a 2 hour Basic First Aid Module £10

Each course member will receive an Attendance certificate for each element of the course and full certification on completion of all three.

Course materials

- 1) 40 Minute Video
- 2) Booklet
- 3) Module Handouts

Venues

Modules at McDiarmid Park on 4th & 11th February. Practical sessions at Kilgraston School on 5th & 12th February 1998.

COACHING YOUNG FOOTBALLERS' CERTIFICATE COURSE

Course Outline and Content

This course is designed to assist anyone, 16 years of age or over, who works with children aged 5 to 12 years in a football, physical education or activity context. Course members must have completed the E (Early Touches) Certificate Course. The format of the 12 hour course includes:-

- 1) Coaching demonstration by course tutors

- 2) Delivery of coaching sessions, in pairs, by course members

Course Cost

£30

Course Materials

- 1) Video
- 2) Booklet
- 3) Course Handouts

Venue

Kilgraston School on 12th, 19th, 24th & 26th March 1998.

On completion of the above two programmes, coaches are then eligible to attend the SFA Children's Licence which will be introduced in 1998.

Saints Football Fours

We are introducing 4-a-side football in 1998 for boys and girls born in 1989 to 1990.

This is in addition to our successful SAINTS SOCCER SEVENS which will continue on Mondays at McDiarmid Park.

SAINTS FOOTBALL FOURS will be on Wednesdays between 4.30 and 6pm. Fifteen sessions are planned from March to May and from August to October and they will consist of a warm-up, a game and calm down.

7-a-side football for young players is proving to be of great benefit with frequent touches of the ball and greater repetition of basic soccer situations. With even less players involved in 4-a-side, each player can expect to improve very quickly and enjoy each game in a realistic, friendly environment.

FOR INFORMATION ON ANY COMMUNITY FOOTBALL EVENT, CONTACT ATHOLL HENDERSON, SFA COMMUNITY COACH, ST JOHNSTONE FC, McDIARMID PARK, PERTH. TEL 01738 626961.

FACE TO FACE WITH

Alan Kernaghan may not be with Saints by the time you read this. His three month period on loan from Manchester City was due to end after the Dundee United game, although the day after we spoke he had an appointment with Frank Clarke, the City manager, to see if a move north could be made permanent. He has made it clear that he would be happy to extend his stay at Perth, even if it means reducing his income considerably. St Johnstone, believe it or not, cannot compete with Manchester City when it comes to salaries, but it is nice to know that when it comes to all-round team spirit and camaraderie the current McDiarmid dressing room takes some beating.

One thing was clear from our conversation. Alan Kernaghan comes across as much more intelligent than the average footballer! Whether this is reflected in paper qualifications, I didn't enquire, but it was apparent that here is a man who talks clearly and concisely about his sport, without descending to those mundane clichés so beloved of the media. We began with that most boring of initial questions...

Q. Where were you born, and what was your early football experience?

AK - "I was born in Otley, in Yorkshire, by the famous Ilkley Moor, but we moved to Northern Ireland very soon after and I stayed there until I was about 16. I played schools football in Northern Ireland, and played in international schoolboy games for the Republic. When I was sixteen, I signed for Middlesbrough, where I stayed for ten superb years. Then four years ago I went to Manchester City."

Q. Why was your time at 'Boro so enjoyable?

AK - "It just was great. I was there through some real period of adversity, including the club becoming virtually bankrupt, but there was a great bunch of

lads and wonderfully passionate fans."

Q. What were the local derbies for Middlesbrough?

AK - "We had two, against Sunderland and Newcastle."

Q. Have you played in the Manchester derby, and how does it compare to the Teeside/Tyneside contests?

AK - "I've played against Manchester United and the atmosphere is great, but it's very different from the Middlesbrough v Sunderland or Newcastle games."

Q. Who do you particularly remember from your time at Middlesbrough?

AK - "When we were struggling, I recall that Bruce Rioch and Colin Todd were in charge. They played a central role in turning around our fortunes on the playing field. We also had Tony Mowbray at the centre of defence and his spirit epitomised 'Boro in those days.'"

Q. What went wrong at Manchester City - not as regards your own circumstances, but as regards the club as a whole?

AK - "I'm not sure. The fans are great at away games, but they're not always so good at home. The pitch is too big - that doesn't help, because when the team loses a goal their heads go down and they end up chasing all over the park. Psychologically that isn't good."

Q. How did you come to end up at Saints?

AK - "I'd had loan spells at Bolton and Bradford and when you're in that situation, you simply get a phone call asking you if you want to speak to another manager. St Johnstone had called Frank Clarke and when he asked me if I was interested in coming here I'm afraid that my first reaction was, 'where are they?' Frank said, 'they're in the Scottish Premier', and I had to explain that I meant where in the country were they!"

Q. Hadn't you played at McDiarmid in a pre-season game for Middlesbrough?

ALAN KERNAGHAN

AK - "Yes, I think I did. Some pre-season match rings some bells, but I obviously didn't remember where it was played! Anyway, once Frank had spoken to me, Paul Sturrock called me in the evening. I remember it was about 9.00 pm and he asked if I could be in Perth for 9.00 am the next day. I then made my debut against Rangers although I didn't know anyone in the side. It was a case of 'my ball' and 'give it here', but I soon discovered everyone's name."

Q. Had you played against any of the Rangers' players in England?

AK - "In my very early days at 'Boro, I'd played against Gazza when he was a youngster at Newcastle. He was just the same as he is today - a good laugh and a great lad."

Q. It has been widely publicised that you are very happy at Saints. Is this true?

AK - "Yes. I'm thoroughly happy here. The whole place is great, everyone is very honest and the players give their all every time they play. Not only that, but everyone at the club, at every level, has been fantastic."

Q. A lot of the players have said that the dressing room atmosphere at McDiarmid is excellent. How does it compare to the English clubs you've been at?

AK - "It's certainly louder. I think that's a Scottish thing. At Saints we all slag each other off all the time. You couldn't do that in England. You'd upset some of the egos."

Q. I know this is an old chestnut, but how

do you find Scottish football compared to English?

AK - "It's not as bad as people make out. There's some very good players in Scotland. The Rangers players could handle themselves anywhere and although I haven't played against Celtic I can see that their players have lots of quality."

Q. Are there any specific players outside the Old Firm who have impressed you?

AK - "Billy Dodds is quite a handful and Tommy Coyne is one of the most intelligent players I've come up against. Tommy has given me more trouble than most."

Q. What about our own players. Who could make it in England?

AK - "Phizzy looks a good prospect. He came back into the side after injury and took several games to get going, but he's been looking likely to score in almost every game recently. Alan Main is another good player. For a defender it is great to have a keeper who can kick the ball as well as Alan. I haven't seen enough of Callum, although I'm trying to arrange a game of golf with him. I was looking forward to getting a game of golf in Scotland: I brought my clubs but haven't had a chance to use them!"

Q. And finally, have you met Oasis on the back of the City connection?

AK - "Yes, several times at games at Maine Road. They're just ordinary lads, albeit with lots of money. I get the impression that they are sometimes uncomfortable if they're invited to the Directors' Box. They've been brought up as ordinary supporters and are quite genuine in their affection for the club."



Alan Kernaghan