

DUNDEE UNITED F.C.



Premier Division
Saturday,
27th March, 1993
Kick off 3.00 p.m.



CELTIC

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TANNADICE TOPICS

TANNADICE DIARY

MONDAY, MARCH 1

In the immediate wake of his intention to resign, manager Jim McLean indicated that there were no pre-conceived ideas as to whom should be his successor.

TUESDAY, MARCH 2

On the playing side Duncan Ferguson (slight strain) and Scott Crabbe (flu symptoms) were the only worries but at this early stage of the week neither was causing concern.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3

Despite the blizzard conditions, the players undertook a full training session.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4

Duncan Ferguson again missed training and he was joined by Jim McNally. He had an achilles problem which had flared up.

FRIDAY, MARCH 5

On the day when the job of manager was first officially advertised, Duncan Ferguson and Jim McNally were the two doubts for the trip to Airdrie.

SATURDAY, MARCH 6

We extended our unbeaten run to five matches thanks to goals by Duncan Ferguson, Paddy Connolly and John Clark who contributed to a 3-1 win at Airdrie. The reserves match at Tannadice was postponed.

MONDAY, MARCH 8

Saturday's match at Broomfield left a legacy of three injury doubts for the visit of Motherwell on Tuesday evening. David Bowman (ankle), Dave Narey and Duncan Ferguson (high strains) were the casualties.

With Alex Cleland, Gary Bolland and Freddy Van der Hoorn sidelined, a youthful reserve side did very well to progress to the semi-final of the Reserve League Cup at the expense of Hearts at Tynecastle.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9

The last clash of the McLean brothers ended in stalemate and even though Motherwell were under the cosh for almost the entire 90 minutes they left with a point thanks to a goalless draw.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10

Already there were two doubts for Saturday's Tynecastle clash. Duncan Ferguson, who played against Motherwell picked up a groin strain and Dave Bowman who missed the game still wasn't guaranteed to be fit in time.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11

The injury picture was a little brighter with Dave Narey fit after missing the Motherwell match and Dave Bowman able to complete most of the training. The only real doubt surrounded striker Duncan Ferguson's groin strain.

FRIDAY, MARCH 12

Duncan Ferguson was declared fit for the vital Euro clash with Hearts. Dave Bowman and Dave Narey who missed Tuesday's game both came back into the reckoning.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13

Ian Baird's 20th minute goal gave Hearts a victory they barely deserved to frustrate our European cause. At Tannadice a fine second half performance gave the reserves a 4-2 win over Partick Thistle to keep the pressure on Hearts at the top.

DAVE PASSES 600 BARRIER



Over the years, Dave Narey, who first signed for United almost twenty years ago, has established every appearance record possible at Tannadice.

In addition, United's stylish and economical defender has created a Scottish record by playing in 75 European ties in the Tangerine of United.

He is already well ahead of the field of Tannadice all-comers at League level and last week at McDiarmid Park, Dave made the 600th League appearance of his illustrious career.

Dave joins an elite band of players to have reached that total.

Whilst some, like Sandy Jardine, Kenny Thomson and Graeme Armstrong (the record holder), have accumulated this figure with more than one club, only two others have broken the 600 barrier at a single club.

Jim Gallacher played 607 games for Clydebank plus a half century or so with Arbroath, but the record appearance holder for one club is Bob Ferrier who made 626 appearances for Motherwell in the twenties and thirties.

Dave can't beat Ferrier's total this season, but there are enough games left for him to move into second place above Jim Gallacher.

So it's congratulations to Dave on passing yet another milestone

in an enduring career in which so much has already been achieved.

APPLICATIONS STILL COMING IN

As stated earlier, the Club are in no rush to appoint a man to succeed Jim McLean, as he himself confirms,

"Applications were still coming in at the start of this week and whilst a closer look will be taken shortly, no doors have been closed as yet.

"The club do not intend rushing into making any decision with the end of the season, the likely time when the matter is finalised".

MIDFIELD DUO SUSPENDED

Two of United's regular midfielders are suspended for the visit of Celtic this afternoon.

Billy McKinnlay served out a one-match ban this afternoon, whilst Dave Bowman is sidelined today and again for next week's trip to Falkirk when he'll complete a two match ban.

TOM'S COMEBACK HOPES



Last year full-back Tom McMillan underwent a knee operation which was originally to ensure that he suffered no problems in later life.

He had been advised previously that his career in football

was over, but the operation has been so successful that there is now a realistic chance that he may be able to resume playing when all had appeared lost.

The specialist who carried out the operations — David Dandy — now feels that Tom can step up his training with a view to begin training again at the start of next season.

The same surgeon recently carried out the same operation on Blackburn's multi-million pound striker Alan Shearer and there are several others currently playing in the English Premier League who have had the same operation.

Manager Jim McLean was extremely pleased to hear the news, "Tom is one of the most deserving young men to get a chance in football.

"He isn't just a good player, but also a very nice person and the injury which so threatened his career was a tragedy.

"Now the door, if not open, is at least ajar for him to try and pick up the pieces of his career.

"Whilst it is no certainty that he'll be able to play again, I am absolutely delighted he at least is being given a second chance when all seemed lost".

According to the surgeon, where the success rate of the operation used to be one in ten, advancement in technology has improved that ratio dramatically to nine out of ten cases.

Although obviously delighted about the news, Tom said,

"I am trying not to get too excited, but am looking forward to giving it another go and know that it is a long time to the start of next season".

Everyone at Tannadice extends their best wishes that Tom's comeback hopes come to fruition.

BALL BOYS

The Ball Boys for this afternoon's match are Barnhill Primary, Dundee.



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HONOURS:

UEFA Cup: Runners-up: 1986-87.

Scottish League:

Premier Division Champions:
1982-83;
Division 2 Champions: 1924-25,
1928-29; **Runners-up:** 1930-31,
1959-60.

Scottish Cup: 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.

Summer Cup:

Runners-up: 1964-65.

Scottish Wartime Cup:
Runners-up: 1939-40.

MICHAEL'S FIRST FOR 18 MONTHS



MICHAEL O'NEILL... first goal for 18 months

Michael O'Neill recently said that one of his main disappointments was that he hadn't scored this season.

Well the Northern Ireland internationalist finally laid that bogey at McDiarmid Park last Saturday to end a goal drought which stretched way back to 12th October 1992 when he scored in Celtic's 4-1 win at Parkhead.

Mind you, Michael only made two more appearances as substitute after that match last season.

However, things certainly look to be picking up for Michael. Although he was replaced late on during Saturday's match, manager Jim McLean revealed that he had only been taken off early so that the United support could show the appreciation of his sizeable contribution to our 4-1 victory.

Next week Michael will be heading for Dublin as part of the Northern Ireland side trying to sustain a World Cup challenge and with him settling in nicely in his wide left berth at Tannadice, the season looks like ending on a much happier note for Michael after only resuming his Tannadice career in October after being out of contract last summer.

JIM McLEAN

The announcement of my intention to retire from the position of United's manager by the end of the season has attracted a fair bit of publicity.

In fact, some of my friends in the media are even trying to get me to stay on, inferring that it won't happen, but this time I might well prove them wrong again!

Personally, I have never been one to dwell on the past, but I'd like to make an exception here, because some of the happiest and unhappiest moments of my Tannadice career have been in matches where Celtic have been involved. Finding the words to do justice to some of these occasions is extremely difficult, but I have no doubt that some of the best spectacles in terms of pure football ability in which Dundee United have participated have been against Celtic.

I have several abiding memories.

Firstly, I recall Charlie Nicholas once scoring four goals against us in a reserve match in an incredible game. And on a happier note one of our few wins at Hampden, but one rarely mentioned by the west coast press, came against Celtic in the 1981 Scottish Cup semi-final (but don't tell Doug Ballie of the Sunday Post!).

Two low points also came at Hampden in 1985 and 1988. On both occasions silverware was tantalisingly within our grasp.

In many instances we have gone in front against Celtic and managed to hold on, but sadly not in either of these finals when it mattered most.

I seldom visit the Board Room after a match for more than a minute, because if we have lost I don't want to talk about the game and feel it wrong to do so if we have won.

However, whether in victory or defeat and there has been the odd occasion when we have stolen victories at Parkhead, the Celtic directors have always been amongst the ones I admire most because of their courteous manner, irrespective of the result. If today's match is boring and that is unlikely if past history is anything to go by, one alternative form of entertainment might be to compare the press cuttings concerning myself and the Celtic Board over the past year!

Unfortunately, today's match doesn't have the importance of many previous contests, but that won't prevent the players, officials and supporters wanting to win as much as ever.

I sincerely hope that my last match in charge against Celtic does justice to some of the thrilling games between the clubs of the past 22 years, but obviously with Dundee United emerging as victors.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Celtic supporters who have dropped me a line recently and I will be replying to all of you personally.



NEXT HOME MATCH:

Saturday, 10th April

Premier Division

v

HIBERNIAN

Kick-off 3.00 p.m.

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MATCH REVIEW

v MOTHERWELL

Tuesday, 9th March, 1993

Premier Division — 34th match

Venue — Tannadice Park

UNITED (0)0
MOTHERWELL (0)0

Crowd: 5,134

UNITED: Main, Perry, Malpas, McNally, Clark, Welsh, Crabbe (J. O'Neill 73), O'Neill, McKinlay, Ferguson, Connolly. (Sub not used: Hannah)

MOTHERWELL: Dykstra, Griffin, Sneddon, Martin, Philliben, McCart, Kirk, Angus (Dotan 57), Arnott (McGrillen 88), O'Donnell, Cooper.

Bookings: United — McKinlay (squaring up to Arnott 53).

Motherwell — Arnott (high challenge on McKinlay 53), Philliben (late tackle on Crabbe 66).

Referee: J. F. McGilvray (Edinburgh)



After five successive games unchanged, injury enforced two changes in the United line-up.

Dave Bowman and Dave Narey failed to recover from knocks and Jim McNally and Brian Welsh were drafted in as their replacements.

Relegation-threatened Motherwell's intentions were clear from the start — they were here to frustrate and unfortunately, they returned to Fir Park with their mission accomplished.

Yet it might have been different had Dykstra not denied Paddy Connolly after he seized on a poorly directed header by McCart.

On the half hour mark Motherwell's Dutch 'keeper tipped over a Scott Crabbe shot on the turn and even when he was beaten

Martin was on the line to turn away a Jim McNally shot.

A lightning raid after a rare Motherwell attack almost broke the deadlock on the stroke of half-time, but Martin diverted Duncan Ferguson's low cross away from danger.

United's frustration continued into the second half when finding a way through to Dykstra proved even more problematical.

A curling John Clark free kick which Dykstra beat out was as near as we came to breaking Motherwell's defensive barrier.

Indeed the limit of their attacking ambitions can be no better illustrated than by the fact that an Ian Angus shot straight at Alan Main was their only one on target all evening.

The match as a whole was reminiscent of a European tie where the opposition would be content with a goalless draw.

Motherwell would have indeed delighted with another point in their climb away from the relegation zone, but for the Tangerines, it was another blow in our quest to return to the European arena.

Manager Jim McLean's assessment was straight to the point,

"The first half was acceptable — the second very disappointing.

"To be fair to the players, some of them were carrying injuries, but at the end of the day there are no excuses."

v HEARTS

Saturday, 13th March, 1993

Premier Division — 35th match

Venue — Tynecastle Park (Edinburgh)

UNITED (0)0
HEARTS (1)1
Baird (19)

Crowd: 7,087

UNITED: Main, Perry, Malpas, Bowman (McInally 82), Clark, Narey, Crabbe (Dailly 60), McKinlay, M. O'Neill, Ferguson, Connolly.

HEARTS: Walker, McLaren, Snodin, Levein, Hogg, Wright (Mauchlen 82), Robertson, Ferguson, Baird, Millar, Ferguson (Bannon 76).

Bookings: Hearts — Hogg (tackle on Ferguson 69).

Dundee — Bowman (high tackle on Robertson 57).

Referee: M. F. Pocock (Aberdeen)

Our European four pointer with Hearts ended in the same way of too many clashes with Hearts at Tynecastle as Hearts extended their unbeaten run against us in the capital to eight years.



Yet on the balance of play and chances we deserved a draw at the very least.

Scott Crabbe almost got the final touch to put us ahead in the eighth minute, but Paddy Connolly's cross drifted harmlessly across goal.

Nicky Walker was glad to tip over Michael O'Neill's 20 yarder six minutes later.

Five minutes later Alan Main performed an action replay of Walker's save from Snodin's free-kick.

The resultant corner, however, spelt disaster for United. Snodin's kick escaped from Alan Main's hands and though Robertson failed to apply the finishing touch, Baird didn't as he squeezed the ball in at the far post.

Walker dived bravely at the feet of Duncan Ferguson as he ran on to Billy McKinlay's curling cross, but right on half-time Walker's legs blocked Paddy Connolly's shot after Scott Crabbe had found him in the clear.

The pattern of United's missed chances continued in the second period.

Christian Dailly had only been on the field for a couple of minutes when he outpaced the home defence to reach Duncan Ferguson's through ball, but he scooped his shot a foot or so wide.

Walker again blocked a Paddy Connolly shot with ten minutes remaining and before the end Paddy headed tamely into Walker's arms.

Beaten, yes, but not down-hearted after dominating a match which as manager Jim McLean said, "Nicky Walker's man-of-the-match award tells it all."

However, defeat meant we trailed Hearts by two points and the Edinburgh side had a game in hand, but Europe was still far from a lost cause.

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MATCH REVIEW

V ST JOHNSTONE

Saturday, 20th March, 1993
Premier Division — 36th match
Venue — McDiarmid Park

ST JOHNSTONE (1)
Dunne 30

UNITED (2)
McInally 14, M. O'Neill 29, Connolly 59, J. O'Neill 69

Crowd: 4,510

ST JOHNSTONE: Rhodes, Byrne (Kinnaird 70), Deas, McGowne, McGinnis (McClelland 60), Redford, Moore, Davies, Wright, Dunne, Turner.

UNITED: Main, Perry, Malpas, McInally, Clark, Narey, Crabbe (J. O'Neill 55), McKinlay, M. O'Neill (Hannah 84), Ferguson, Connolly. No Bookings.

Referee: Mr. R. Orr (Kilbarchan)



After losing our last two matches to St Johnstone we headed for McDiarmid determined to atone for those results.

Jim McInally for Dave Bowman was the only change in the United line-up which made an impressive opening with Paddy Connolly and Duncan Ferguson both going close before Saints came into the game in bizarre fashion.

Alan Main was penalised for carrying the ball outside his box when trying to take a free-kick. The referee, however, had waved play on. Alan atoned for his error with a fine save from Ian Redford's free-kick.

A defensive mistake was also responsible for us opening the scoring. Dunne played the ball square into Paddy Connolly who had Jim McInally in support and when Paddy released Jim, he chipped the ball over the diving body of Rhodes into the far corner.

Saints rallied, but failed to trouble Alan Main and found themselves two down when Jim McInally's cross from the left was missed by Turner and fell to Michael O'Neill who sent a swerving shot with the outside of his left foot into the far corner.

Saints reduced the deficit almost immediately. Byrne's cut back came off Dave Narey and John Clark and fell to Dunne who gave Alan Main no chance from 12 yards.

United increased their lead thanks yet again to a Saints defensive slip-up. Duncan Ferguson's flick was intended for Paddy Connolly to run on to.

Turner appeared to have cut it out, but his touch let him down and Paddy Connolly strode on to slip the ball under Rhodes.

Following this United took a stranglehold on the match and at times played some exhilarating one-touch football.

Goal number four arrived in the 60th minute. Paddy Connolly slid the ball out to Billy McKinlay in space on the right and he fired in an angular shot to which John O'Neill got the final touch as the ball went in via the far post.

Thereafter the Tangerines threatened to run riot. Rhodes touched a Duncan Ferguson shot on to the bar and the big striker struck the outside of the post with five minutes left.

Saints put in a late flurry, but there could be no disguising the quality of football United played in what was a resounding victory.



United's Jim McInally wards off John Davies during the game at Perth last week.

(Pic courtesy of Perthshire Advertiser)

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ACTION FOCUS

v MOTHERWELL
Tuesday, 9th March, 1993



Motherwell defender Brian Martin flies in between Paddy Connolly and Duncan Ferguson to clear.



Sieb Dykstra, Motherwell's keeper clasps this cross as Paddy Connolly awaits the outcome.



Billy McKinlay runs on to this pass from Duncan Ferguson, but just failed to hit the target.



Michael O'Neill about to skip past Chris McCart as he heads for goal.



Duncan Ferguson gets in a header in the Motherwell goal.

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