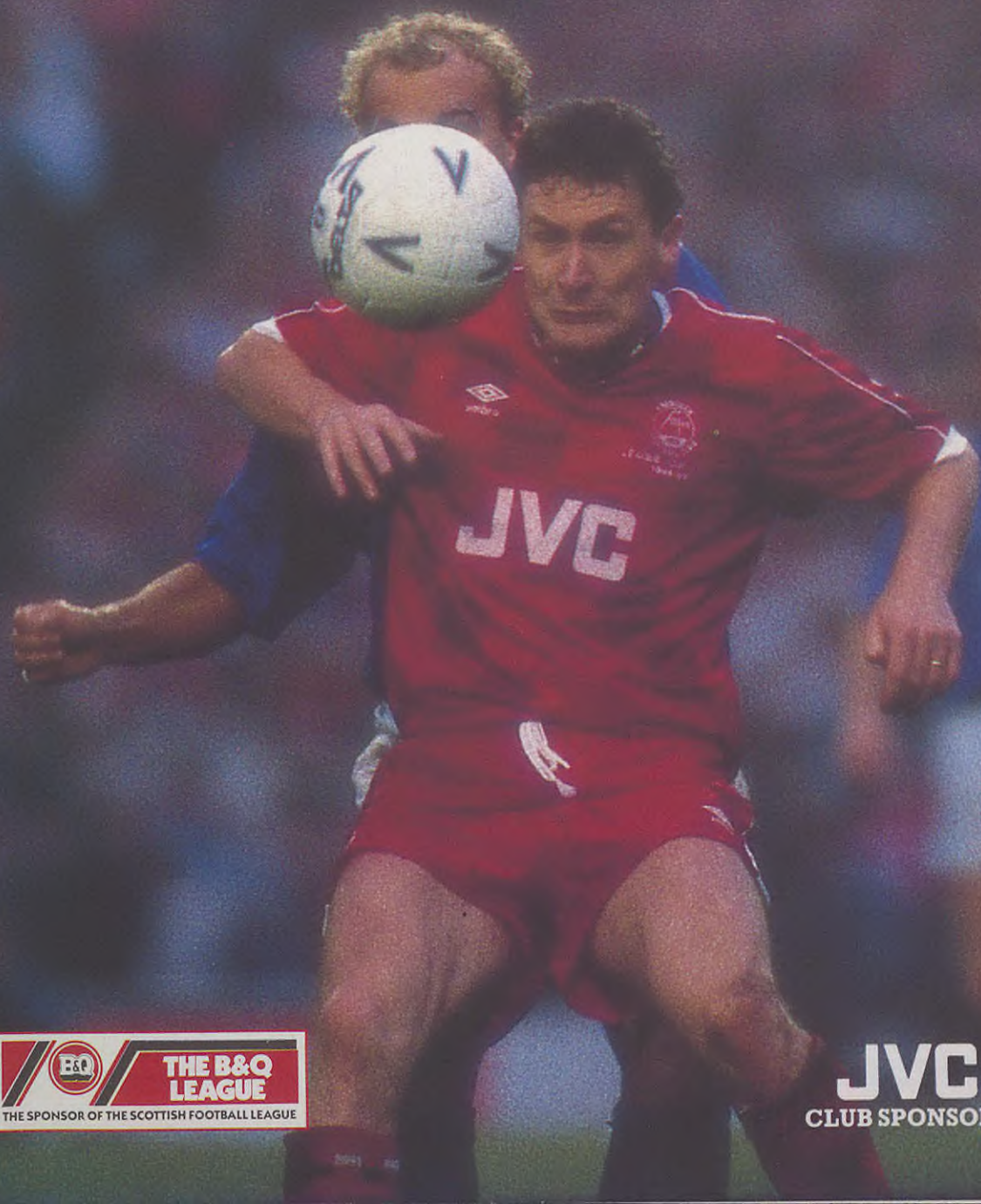


THE DON

MATCHDAY MAGAZINE PRICE 60p

B & Q League Premier Division ABERDEEN v CELTIC Wednesday 2nd November 1988



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ACTION REPLAY



Davie Dodds celebrates (left) after beating Chris Woods for the second time (above) in the thrilling Hampden final. Dodds' goals brought the Dons level but Ally McCoist swung the game Rangers' way with the winner two minutes from time. Below: Charlie Nicholas is closed down by Terry Butcher. Pictures by Jim Irvine.



ALEX SMITH

It was disappointing to lose the Skol Cup final in the last seconds, but we took part in a tremendous game of football.

We felt at one stage that we were going to win it and we are very proud of the way we played and the way we handled the game under tremendous pressure from the media.

I felt that there was unfair pressure put on Aberdeen Football Club as a whole and unfair criticism of the Aberdeen team after the Rangers match here as being the perpetrators in what was a tough game.

It takes two teams to create a tough game and in my opinion, apart from the one incident, which has been well and truly covered by the media since, the game was competitive, but not as physical as some would have you believe.

I think we were put under pressure because we won the game 2-1 - and deserved to do so on the day.

It's always hard to accept being second in a final, but it only strengthens our resolve to go back and win the trophy the next time.

What we have got to do



now is put the final behind us and think about the future.

We have to make sure that we don't allow the disappointment to take over.

We must take the positive things from the game and take pride in yet another tremendous final.

If you are going to lose, it is better to come out of it with something and Aberdeen FC came out of that game with tremendous respect from the audience who were there and those who watched it on TV.

Obviously I'm writing these notes before we have played the Hearts game and hope-

fully we will have looked after that.

We were going into that match looking to take full points and with Celtic coming it's another big match and a very important one from both teams' point of view, particularly ours since it is our home fixture.

We will be hoping to gain enough points from these two games to keep us on course in our challenge for the League title, forgetting about the Skol Cup and thinking of the future.

Celtic will be a very hard one. They are recovering and starting to show their true form after a very disappointing start by their standards.

I would imagine this will be another entertaining game and one which we, at the end of the day, will win.

As a management team we arrived only three months ago and we said at the stage we had a very good staff and we had to add to the squad.

Losing the final has strengthened our resolve to do just that.

We will be hoping to bring in one or two new faces to help us gain the points necessary to be challenging at the top of the league.



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'A' TEAM REPORT

Young strikers John Dickson and Eoin Jess have provided the success story in a recent run of favourable results in reserve team games.

Dickson's goals haul has been particularly impressive and Jess, once on an 'S' form with Rangers, is not far behind.

The outcome of the team performances spearheaded by in-form strikers is that Dons are in the top three in both the Premier Reserve League and the Reserve League(East).

The third team won three games on the trot after a slip-up by 2-1 at East Fife while the seconds beat Motherwell and St Mirren with a narrow 3-2 defeat at the hands of Rangers at Ibrox in between.

In that Rangers game it was particularly disappointing for Dickson who scored both Dons' goals.

"He has been making really solid progress," said coach Teddy Scott. "So, too, has Jess. We have been very encouraged by the way they have both been playing in recent matches.

"However, it is never down to individuals overall.



John Dickson - finding the net regularly for the reserves.

Saturday 1st October
PREMIER RESERVE LEAGUE
ABERDEEN 2 MOTHERWELL 1
Scorers: Porteous, Gray (pen)
Team: Beckett, Ferguson, Harvie, McRobb, Thomson, Gregg Watson, Porteous, Gray, Dickson, I Robertson, Jess.

Saturday 8th October
PREMIER RESERVE LEAGUE
RANGERS 3 ABERDEEN 2
Scorer: Dickson (2)
Team: Beckett, McRobb, Harvie, Gray, Thomson, Gregg Watson, Dickson, I Robertson, McLeod, Selbie, Jess.
Subs: Ferguson (for Selbie), Jess (for Roddie).

Saturday 15th October
PREMIER RESERVE LEAGUE
ABERDEEN 2 ST. MIRREN 0
Scorers: Dickson, Jess.
Team: Beckett, Mason, Harvie, Gray, Irvine, Gregg Watson, Porteous, I Robertson, Dickson, Jess (McLeod), Grant.
Sub: McLeod (for Jess)

Match details for Reserve League East are printed on the statistics page of tonight's programme.

We have witnessed some very impressive team performances recently which have helped the strikers to do well."

Dickson scored at East Fife, East Stirling, two at Forfar, two at Rangers and one against St Mirren at Pittodrie ...consistent striking by any standards.

Another 'plus' for the Young Dons recently has been in the inclusion in first team squads of both Alan Selbie and Scott Harvie, a sure sign that their senior careers could be about to get underway.

The Pittodrie system is to attempt to ease the way gradually for the young players into the first team rather than to suddenly fling them in 'stone cold'.

Paul Wright, the new slimmer version, has also scored some useful reserve team goals and duly earned recognition for doing so in the shape of selection for the Scotland under-21 party. Stevie Gray successfully used reserve games to recover from his injury while a number of 'fringe' players have also benefited from spells at this level.



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AROUND ABERDEEN

NOT SO SIMPLE SIMEN

Norwegian under-21 international Simen Agdestein is used to taking his time over crucial moves.

Agdestein, a left-sided forward with amateur side Lyn, who play in the Norwegian Second Division, is also a world-ranked chess master.

The player has been training with the Dons for a trial period while he decides whether to make the step up from amateur to professional and to move from Scandinavia to Scotland.

His deliberations were temporarily suspended when he was recalled to link up with the full national squad for their game against Italy.

During his stay in Aberdeen, Agdestein, rated 16th in the world at chess, writes a daily chess column for Oslo's top morning newspaper and has published two books on the game, gave a lecture to Aberdeen University's chess club during his stay.

Then he set off on a major globe-trot. After joining the Norway squad in Italy, he just had time to return home for a change of clothes before heading off to Greece for the World Chess Championships. That over, he was back home for another flying visit before travelling with Norway again for their World Cup qualifier in Cyprus.

YOUNG DONS IMPRESS

Some of Aberdeen's youngsters helped bring a sparkle to the 50th anniversary celebrations of Banff Highland League club Deveronvale at Princess Royal Park recently.

With Dons unable to send a full side as hoped because of the preparations for the Skol Cup final, the youngsters helped to make it a memorable night with some exciting attacking football, despite the blustery and wet conditions.

The young Dons won 3-0 with the goals coming from Andy McLeod, Graham Lawrie and Lee Gardiner, who carried on



Willie Miller

where he left off after returning to football after a broken collar bone.

MAGNIFICENT MILLER

Congratulations are due to Dons skipper Willie Miller, who recently became the most-capped defender in the history of Scottish international football when he made his 63rd full Scotland appearance.

Although the 1-1 draw against Yugoslavia at Hampden was a disappointment, it takes nothing away from Miller's magnificent achievement and he was honoured by being made skipper for the night.

TWO LEFT FEET

After David Robertson's trousers, we can now exclusively reveal the tale of Brian Grant's shoes.....

In his rush to pack his clothes for the trip to St Mirren recently, it appears Grant was none-too-diligent about the shoes he threw into the bottom of his suit bag.

It was only when he was travelling to the ground, after making the journey from Aberdeen in a tracksuit, that Grant noticed he had packed two LEFT shoes - and not only that, one was black and the other dark blue.

The right-footed Grant managed to conceal the problem until virtually the last minute, when the error was noticed as the shoes nestled beneath the bright lights of the dressing room while he was out on the park warming up!

BOYS, BABY-SITTING AND BUSES

Pittodrie has been busier than usual over the last few days, with 17 youngsters up during the school holiday for the usual week of training with the Dons.

Chief scout Jimmy Carswell was been the young players' "godfather" during their stay, making sure all's well at the digs and that the players are not homesick and so on.

But the role of babysitter has been taken on by assistant manager Jocky Scott, who at one stage was looking after and training the potential Dons of the future morning, noon and night when the third team were in action.

Everyone's had to muck in as the Pittodrie staff have been spread far and wide - including groundsman Jim Warrender, who found himself driving the coach when the youngsters went to watch a combination of the third team and reserves playing in Deveronvale's 50th anniversary match.

A look at the itinerary tells the story of a very hectic week. Drew Jarvie and Jocky Scott took the youngsters all through their training, but were called into action in the evenings with the reserves on the Saturday, the third team on the Monday,

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Deveronvale on Tuesday, with boss Alex Smith taking in the Scotland under-21 game at Tynecastle on the same night and travelling down to Glasgow for the full international the following night.

Spare a thought, too, for Teddy Scott, who has had to prepare fresh kit daily not only for three club teams, but the youngsters as well during a wretched week weatherwise.

ALEX'S BIG NIGHT

Plans are firming up for the Alex McLeish testimonial, which will be between the Dons side who won the European Cup Winners Cup in Gothenburg in 1983 and an international select XI.

The match will be at Pittodrie on December 13, kick off 7.30pm and tickets go on sale from tomorrow. They will be: Main Stand £5.50; South Stand £3.50; behind goals £3.00; pensioners and children £1.50.

Alex's testimonial brochure is now available, from the ticket office at the club, priced £1.50.

ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

Dons manager Alex Smith and secretary Ian Taggart joined representatives from 20 branches at the annual meeting of the Association of Aberdeen Supporters Clubs at Pittodrie on September 29.

All the AASC officers were given a vote of confidence by the members by being voted in again, which means that Alex Hosie remains as chairman, Brian Rae as vice-chairman and Isobel Fyfe continues in her role as secretary/treasurer.

Two new branches have joined the association. They are New Fittsligo (contact Mr Thompson on 07717 216) and Linlithgow (contact Mr T McNein).

Just a reminder that membership lists and fees are now due.

MILLER MILESTONE

Dons skipper Willie Miller will be present at the Treetops Hotel on Sunday, November 6 to receive his 1987-88 player of the season award. If you'd like to be there to acknowledge the big man's achievement, tickets cost just £1.

NEW MEMBERS SCHEME

The AASC has developed a new scheme for fans who would like to join the official supporters organisation, but do not live in an area served by a local branch. The Associate members scheme will cost £5 a year for adults and £2.50 for juniors. Further details from Isobel Fyfe, the association secretary.

RACING'S A WINNER

More than 80 members attended the Dyce Branch race night at the Airport Hotel on October 1.

The event, in aid of branch funds, was voted a big success and many thanks go to the sponsors: Spiders Web, TSB Dyce, Wilsons Duffus Solicitors, Dunavon House Hotel, DEP Plumbing, Crofters Sandwich Bar, Lewis Kelman Builders, Gardeners Spar Store and Parkhill Nurseries.

TRIANGLES TRIUMPH

The quiz night, based on ITV's Sporting Triangles programme, held in aid of the Alex McLeish testimonial was another great success and many thanks go to the celebrities and guests who added to the occasion.

Winners were the Dundee United duo of Paul Hegarty and Dave Narey. One disappointment was the non-appearance of Rangers striker Ally McCoist, who was substituted ably by Jim Bett.

Dyce Branch, who ran the event, will be presenting a cheque to the Alex McLeish testimonial fund on November 1.



DONS DIARY

Tuesday 20th September:

The Skol Cup Final beckons again! A 2-0 win over Dundee United at Dens Park, with goals by John Hewitt and David Dodds provides another Final against the winners of the Rangers-Hearts semi-final at Hampden.

Wednesday 21st September:

It's a repeat of last year's magnificent Final as Rangers beat Hearts 3-0.

Saturday 24th September:

Now it's Don's turn to beat Hearts, this time with a 1-0 scoreline at Pittodrie set up by a Charlie Nicholas goal.

Tuesday 27th September:

The winning run continues as Robert Connor nets the goal which beats Hamilton in the rain at Douglas Park.

Saturday 1st October:

A 1-1 draw at Motherwell is not quite the preparation Dons wanted for the return UEFA Cup leg against Dynamo in Dresden. Willie Miller is Dons' scorer.

Wednesday 5th October:

European hopes die for another season as Dons lose 2-0 to Dynamo Dresden in East Germany. Simpson plays but injury rules out Nicholas and Hewitt and then Robertson is sent off.

Saturday 8th October:

A great boost for Skol Cup Final as Dons beat Rangers 2-1 at Pittodrie after a Neale Cooper goal gives 'Gers the lead. Hewitt and Nicholas get the decisive goals.

Monday 10th October:

Jim Bett is recalled to the Scottish squad for World Cup qualifier against Yugoslavia at Hampden. McLeish and Miller also in. Dave Robertson and Paul Wright are in the Under-21 squad.

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PITTODRIE PROFILE

Dons striker John Hewitt gives every impression of being a young man who is once again enjoying his football.

It patently hasn't always been the case in the last year or so, as he is the first to point out.

"Last season for me was a complete nightmare," says the 25-year-old Aberdonian, who joined his home town club in 1979 from junior side Middlefield Wasps.

"The previous manager, Mr Porterfield, seemed to play me as a wide midfielder and I had never played there in my life before. It was a totally alien position to me.

"The best seasons I've had for Aberdeen have always been through the middle or wide up front, which is where all my goals have come from."

Now, though, Hewitt is enjoying a new approach and a new freedom under the guidance of Alex Smith and Jocky Scott.

"The manager and Jocky have just told Charlie Nicholas, Davie Dodds and me to go out and play football, just as long as we are putting the opposition back four under pressure. It suits me and I'll be happier still if I can just get a few more goals."

He adds: "It's a lot better for me and hopefully it will benefit the team in the long run."

He is also enjoying playing alongside Charlie Nicholas and appreciates the hard work the former Celtic and Arsenal man has put in on his personal fitness.

"Charlie played a good few seasons in England and he was in the reserves quite a bit. I think he put on a bit of weight, but he's worked hard on that



JOHN HEWITT

and he has managed to shed a few pounds.

"All credit to Charlie. Some people might have gone into a shell and not bothered, but he's worked hard and hopefully that will stand him in good stead for the rest of the season."

Talking to Hewitt, it is apparent that it is not just his attitude which has changed. He sees a new mood sweeping Pittodrie as a whole.

"This year we seem to be more disciplined. There's a lot more urgency about the club, a bit more determination and a will to win.

"I think that was something that what was lacking last season. And I'm sure we'll be there looking for honours at the end of the year either in the league or the Scottish Cup.

He continues: "The management pair we have here now are the right two for the job. This year the training's much harder and I think that is benefitting us in games.

"And last year we were throwing away silly points and the manager was just saying it was disappointing. That's not the attitude for a club like Aberdeen to have.

"We should be going out every week to win and Jocky and Alex won't accept anything less than victory."

It's not surprising, therefore, that while Hewitt is doing his best to put the disappointment of the Skol Cup final defeat by Rangers to the back of his mind, he is not shirking from a little self-criticism.

He laid on the first goal for Davie Dodds from a corner, but was still not happy with his overall performance.

"Hampden is a place I love to play at and I had been so keyed up and looking forward to it. But on the day I just felt drained. It was really disappointing, but we have to put that behind us now and think about the rest of the season."

There are obvious parallels with last season in terms of results and league position to date, but while last year's campaign was a pretty wide open race to the line, Hewitt believes it could be more clear cut this time.

He sees Rangers as very much the team to beat - and is not slow to point out that Dons have already taken two points off Graeme Souness's men in the league.

"Rangers are definitely the team to beat. Hearts, Dundee United and Celtic are all capable of taking points off each other. We have taken points off Rangers already and we have to hope that somebody else can follow our example."



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BACK TRACK

5 YEARS AGO

Following John Greig's departure from the Ibrox hot seat, Aberdeen went into November 1983 locked in a determined bid to keep Alex Ferguson at Pittodrie.

The general feeling, particularly among the press was that Fergie would end up at Ibrox, but on November 1st Ferguson told his players to forget the speculation and concentrate on their Cup Winners Cup tie against Beveren.

Aberdeen appeared to hold the upper hand after a goalless draw in Belgium in the first leg.

Only hours before the kick-off Fergie pulled off a master stroke by announcing his decision to stay. Consequently, Pittodrie was buzzing at kick-off.

Beveren had a couple of glimpses of goal in the opening 10 minutes but once Aberdeen had settled, the Belgians were simply overwhelmed.

Peter Weir caused the visitors no end of problems with his mazy runs and Gordon Strachan was in inspiring form in the middle of the park. Both were subjected to some pretty heavy tackling by Beveren.

Strachan shrugged off a broken nose to open the scoring from the spot in 37 minutes, after Hewitt had been fouled by the visitors' keeper. Neil Simpson headed the second from a Weir cross just on half time. Strachan added another after good work by McGhee and Weir, and the big winger rounded off a great personal performance by slotting home the fourth in 69 minutes.

Theunis got a late consolation for the Belgians.

10 YEARS AGO...

Coming after two successive league defeats, Aberdeen appeared to face an almost impossible task in reversing their 3-0 deficit to German side Fortuna Dusseldorf in the second round of the Cup Winners Cup on November 1st 1978.



Peter Weir

Manager Alex Ferguson took a calculated gamble by playing long term injury victim Bobby Clark for the first time that season but the move appeared to lift the Dons psychologically.

With only two minutes gone the 17,000 crowd were baying for a penalty as a German hand seemed to deflect a net bound Doug Rougvie shot but the referee was not impressed.

Fortuna threatened briefly but Bobby Clark demonstrated his worth with a couple of fine saves. Midway through the first half Aberdeen assumed total control but despite incessant pressure there were no goals at half time.

Eight minutes into the second half Scanlon replaced McMaster and almost immediately the Dons get the vital break-

through. Sullivan, Archibald and Harper combined to set up McClelland for a rare goal. 3 Minutes later Aberdeen reduced the aggregate gap to one when Jarvie headed home a Scanlon corner and Pittodrie erupted.

There was frantic action inside the final 20 minutes as the Dons strove to achieve the impossible. Steve Archibald and Drew Jarvie, twice, came close but Aberdeen's great effort proved to be in vain as Fortuna held on.

15 YEARS AGO

On October 31st 1973 Aberdeen made the trip to Celtic park to face Celtic in the 1st leg of the League Cup Quarter Finals.

A healthy 28,000 crowd turned out for the occasion and the late-comers in the crowd missed an explosive start.

With only 4 minutes gone an Ian Taylor cross was headed down by Arthur Graham to Drew Jarvie who slammed the ball home from 12 yards.

Celtic were stung into retaliation and after a couple of close things Kenny Dalglish ran in to put Celtic level from the edge of the six yard box.

In classic Celtic fashion the Parkhead men scored again a minute later. Hay robbed Jarvie of the ball and passed to Dalglish who netted from just inside the box. The home side continued to seek more goals but Bobby Clark denied Celtic further success in the first half.

Willoughby replaced Joe Smith at half time but there was little obvious change to the pattern until 10 minutes into the second half totally against the run of play Drew Jarvie deflected a wayward Dave Robb shot past Hunter into the net for the Dons equaliser.

Once again Celtic responded with a goal of their own inside a minute when Pat McCluskin rifled home a 20 yarder after an upfield surge by McGrain.

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CHARLIE NICHOLAS



MEET THE VISITORS

CELTIC

Premier League champions Celtic have had anything but a smooth start to the defence of their title. Who would have bet on Billy McNeill's men dropping 10 points in their opening 10 games?

But that's exactly what happened. Incredible when you consider Celtic dropped just 16 points from a possible 88 when they claimed the flag last season.

Celtic have steadied the ship now. But that dreadful start could cost them the retention of the title.

What makes it all the more frustrating for their manager is that Billy can't put his finger on one single reason for their dreadful start.

They had the usual injury problems. But such is the frantic pace of the Premier League, every club has more than their share of long term injuries these days.

Probably losing their Republic of Ireland goalkeeper Pat Bonner

following a major back operation was more significant than first thought. Celtic splashed out £300,000 to buy Ian Andrews from Leicester as a replacement.

However Andrews has had problems adjusting to the Scottish game and Celtic have now fallen back on veteran Alan Rough. Despite his International career being over, Alan is still Scotland's most capped goalie of all time.

Significantly, Celtic have steadied up since his introduction. They've started to string a run of results together and are looking like their old selves again.

In an effort to find a winning blend it's hardly surprising to discover Celtic have used 19 different players already this season. They only used 21 in the whole of last season, stretching to 55 games as they won the double in their centenary year.

Skipper Roy Aitken is still the backbone of the side. Whether used in defence or mid-field. His Scotland place may be rather tenuous but he's still vital to the Celtic cause.

He is surrounded in defence by Irish Internationalists from both north and south of the border. Right back Chris Morris and pivot Mick McCarthy are key members of Jack Charlton's Republic of Ireland squad. A squad which did so well in the European Championships in West Germany during the summer. A regular fixture at left back is Northern Ireland's Anton Rogan.

Further forward Celtic's mid-field evolves around Scotland's Paul



Left: Billy McNeill - frustrated by Celtic's poor start to the season.

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Pat Bonner

McStay. Often too much is expected of Paul. He's probably a victim of his own high standards.

Obviously there are going to be games where he'll be marked out of things for long spells. But one flash of the McStay genius can be enough to win any game.

Paul has probably suffered most from Peter Grant's enforced absence through illness. Grant isn't such a subtle player as McStay but he provides the perfect foil.

Few players have McStay's vision. But ball winners like Grant are every bit as important in getting the balance of the side right. Obviously Celtic hope his return will be sooner rather than later.

Up front Frank McAvennie has probably been playing better than at any time of his career. And that's really saying something. He can definitely count himself unlucky not

PREMIER MEETINGS

| | Pitodrie | Parkhead | | |
|---------|----------|----------|-----|-----|
| 1975-76 | 1-2 | 0-1 | 2-0 | 1-1 |
| 1976-77 | 2-1 | 2-0 | 2-2 | 1-4 |
| 1977-78 | 2-1 | 2-1 | 2-3 | 2-2 |
| 1978-79 | 4-1 | 1-1 | 0-0 | 0-1 |
| 1979-80 | 1-2 | 0-2 | 2-1 | 3-1 |
| 1980-81 | 2-2 | 4-1 | 2-0 | 1-1 |
| 1981-82 | 1-3 | 1-3 | 1-2 | 1-0 |
| 1982-83 | 1-2 | 1-0 | 3-1 | 3-1 |
| 1983-84 | 3-1 | 1-0 | 0-0 | 0-1 |
| 1984-85 | 4-2 | 1-1 | 1-2 | 0-2 |
| 1985-86 | 4-1 | 0-1 | 1-2 | 1-1 |
| 1986-87 | 1-1 | 1-0 | 1-1 | 1-1 |
| 1987-88 | 0-1 | 0-1 | 2-2 | 0-0 |

(Aberdeen's score given first)

Aberdeen's Premier Division record against Celtic is:

| P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 52 | 19 | 16 | 17 | 73 | 62 | 54 |

LAST SEASON

September 19th, 1987
CELTIC 2 ABERDEEN 2
 Scorers: Celtic - Burns (37 mins) Stark (48)
 Aberdeen: P Nicholas (60), J Miller (89)
 Attendance: 38,944

October 31st, 1987
ABERDEEN 0 CELTIC 1
 Scorer: McAvennie (72)
 Attendance: 21,000

December 19th, 1987
CELTIC 0 ABERDEEN 0
 Attendance: 37,721

March 30th, 1988
ABERDEEN 0 CELTIC 1
 Scorer: Walker (60)
 Attendance: 23,000

THIS SEASON

September 17th, 1988
CELTIC 1 ABERDEEN 3
 Scorers: Celtic - Miller (pen 44)
 Aberdeen - Grant (27), Bett (pen 33), Dodds (59)
 Attendance: 37,677

to be in Andy Roxburgh's World Cup plans at present.

Even when Celtic were struggling Frank was still among the goals. Ironically when they turned the corner with a 7-1 victory over St Mirren recently, poor Frank didn't get his name on the scoresheet.

However one person who did with vengeance was a former Pittodrie favourite Mark McGhee. He scored one of the all too rare Premier League hat-tricks.

Mark has never quite recaptured the form which he had with Aberdeen. Form which forced him into the Scotland team. However that hat-trick must have given his confidence a big boost.

You can be sure along with Celtic's two other former Aberdeen players - Billy Stark and Joe Miller - he'll be desperate to turn on the style tonight.



Roy Aitken

HOME IMPROVEMENTS?

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COACH'S CLINIC

Club physiotherapist Dave Wylie's latest article on the treatment of injuries and the return to fitness. Here Wylie explains the attention being given to GRAHAM WATSON, who broke his leg at Largs in a pre-season coaching session.

Graham suffered a nasty double break of the fibula, which was a pure accident but which meant his being in plaster for six weeks.

Because of the nature of the injury and its severity he has still not yet kicked a ball this season although we are now into November.

Obviously his being in plaster in this way presented its own problems in terms of his physical fitness. Here the multi-gym is of special value because of the variety of body work available.

Once out of plaster the first thing we had to do was to concentrate on MOBILITY of the ankle.

After six weeks in plaster a joint gets gummed up so it is important to get the movement back. This is important enough with those in a non-athletic job but for a professional footballer it is crucial.

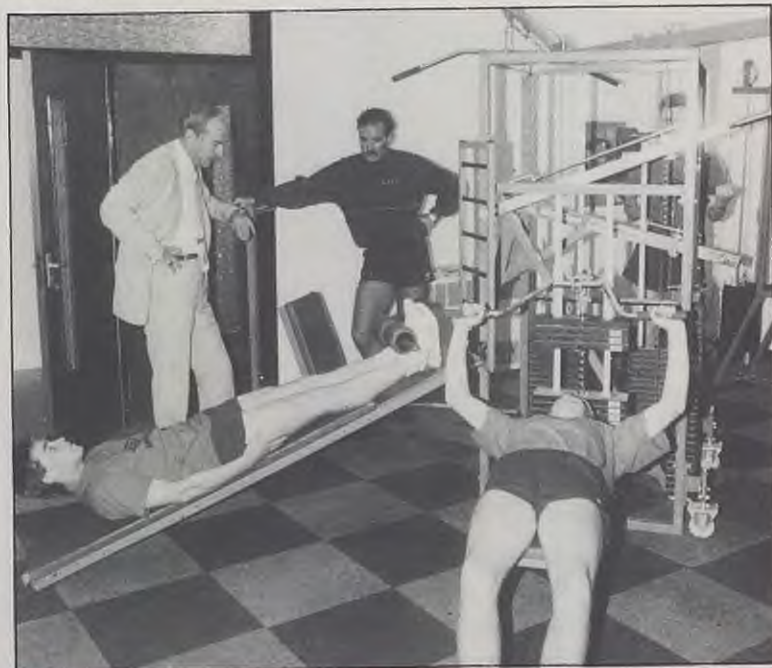
We also have to STRENGTHEN the joint back to its old level and to RE-EDUCATE it. Muscles weaken inevitably and have to be exercised



back to their former bulk. BALANCE is another important aspect and this can be achieved by exercises standing on one foot.

Basically the joint has nerve ends which send impulses through the system to the brain. If you are going to topple over one way, the message goes through to the brain and you instinctively correct.

This delicate system is affected by its temporary non-use and has to be restored.



Try it yourself by standing bare-footed on one leg and feel how the 'correction' mechanism works. You take it for granted until it is impaired by injury.

Graham has gone through various exercises and drills to work on all these aspects and it is important to bring about as much variation as possible because it is hard work and, frankly, the process can also become boring.

Throughout the whole business general fitness is important bearing in mind that because of the extent of his injury running has been out of the question and, from his point of view, the ball remains 'locked away'.

The exercise bike is invaluable in this respect and swimming is another important aid to all-round fitness, perhaps the best.

You can work very hard in the water without exerting weight on the affected limb. You can even run in the water when normal jogging is out of the question.



Eventually light jogging can start once the periodic X-Rays show that the necessary progress has been achieved and the surgeon has given his approval.

Of course, there is no guarantee that even now it is all plain sailing. If Graham feels any undue pain or problems of any kind the source of it must be monitored and the surgeon consulted again.

From Watson's point of view there is a New Year target for his career to get back on the right path again. Hopefully the early part of 1989 will be happier for him than the second half of '88.

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SCOTTISH SCENE

Last month's World Cup draw with Yugoslavia and the disappointment of a dropped Hampden point after a win in Norway, is now behind Scotland.

Attention is now firmly focussed on the next game which is against Cyprus on the holiday isle in February.

And if the Scots ever thought the games against the Cypriots would present them with an easy passage they were brought back to reality with a thump when team boss Andy Roxburgh watched Cyprus draw 1-1 with France.

However when he was in Cyprus Andy did his homework and he was able to bring back some good news for the Scottish camp.

For one fear which has existed is that Scotland will have to take on the Cypriots on a dry, bone hard and bumpy pitch.

Now we know that isn't the case for Andy says: "Traditionally it is wet in Cyprus at that time of the year but that will suit us just as long as the ground itself stands up to the water.

"Last February matches on the pitch at Limassol were cancelled because of the rain and a poor drainage system.

"However Scottish players don't worry about heavy conditions but the Cypriots aren't used to operating in those sort of conditions."

The news is a plus factor for the Scottish qualifying chances for Roxburgh is also quick to point out that we can't expect any gifts.

He said: "By no means will this be an easy tie for us. The fact that France only managed a draw shows



Andy Roxburgh

everybody that we will have our work cut out to get the victory we want.

"Anything the French lose is to our benefit but now we have to make certain we exploit the situation. That means we have to bring two points back from Cyprus.

"The French draw is only a good result for us if we go out there and do the business. We have better players than Cyprus but so have the French and they had to settle for just one point.

"Enthusiasm and organisation are the strengths of the Cypriots. The last time France had been there they won 7-0 and I think they expected to win comfortably again.

"Not only did it not work out that way but the Cypriots thought they were unlucky to only draw. What that tie tells us is that you can never dismiss enthusiasm."

All of which means the build-up to the Scottish trip to Cyprus will be as careful and serious as any World Cup mission the Scots have embarked on during four successful qualifying campaigns.

Boss Roxburgh makes that point quite clear when he insists: "We will prepare for this tie just as we would for a game against Yugoslavia who I still consider the favourites to qualify. Nothing will be left to chance."

The Cypriots were under the Scottish gaze again when they played Norway with Roxburgh's right hand man Craig Brown on a spying mission.

And the showdown between Yugoslavia and France in Belgrade is one that Roxburgh will see for himself.

The truth of the matter, and a truth Roxburgh has made evident to everyone in the squad, is that whatever is happening elsewhere the fate of the Scottish team lies in its own hands.

Though there may well be a little help from above. For as long as the traditionally wet season in Cyprus comes in February, the Scots will be happy.

The apprehension about playing on an unfamiliar and difficult surface will be replaced by the joy of meeting the sort of conditions every Scottish player grew up coping with.

Even the Tartan Army, who had planned a mid winter break in the sun for themselves, won't mind the wet weather ... just as long as the team leaves the fans singing in the rain.

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DOWN SOUTH

Joe Jordan would like it to be known that reports of his retirement are not only greatly exaggerated but also completely off the mark.

I saw for myself, when I caught up with him recently, that Scotland's former World Cup warhorse has no intention of hanging up his much-travelled boots just yet.

The scene, Northampton Town's modest County Ground, represented quite a contrast to other venues at which I was privileged to see Joe in action since he launched his career 20 years ago at Morton.

Now nearing his 37th birthday, he was appointed Bristol City's manager less than six months ago in succession to his former Leeds United colleague Terry Cooper.

He told me on leaving the dressing room, "As you've just seen, I plan to continue playing. I was upset that my recent remarks were misinterpreted by certain newspapers that indicated I'd quit.

"Nothing could be further from the truth. I'm still fit and I plan to keep going. Okay, I'm not going to be good for 40-odd games a season but I like to think I'll manage 20 or so.

"It takes that bit longer to get over an injury when you get to my age. In any case, the management side of the job is pretty time consuming on its own."

Successful management is Joe's priority but he plans to wind down his playing career rather than pack it in altogether.

He almost celebrated instant success at Ashton Gate, leading his team into the Third Division promotion play-offs within a few weeks of being confirmed as Boss.

"Yes, we nearly made it into the Second Division," he added. "We'd have loved to have won promotion but at least we had a real go and could hardly have been closer at the end of the day."

For the record, a maximum 12 points from their final four games of the season rocketed City into the play-offs ahead of several other more fancied sides.

They went on to condemn Sheffield United to Third Division football before eventually going down 4-0 at Walsall in a decider after being level after two legs.

But from what I saw of City in their 3-1 win at Northampton I'd say they look capable of going one better this season and taking a significant step nearer their ultimate target of restoring First Division football to Ashton Gate.

Jordan's commitment is not in doubt. When City attracted 25,000 gates to each of their play-off clashes with Sheffield United and Walsall it merely underlined their excellent crowd potential.

Just six years ago, however, the club was close to folding altogether. The financial kiss of life was provided by a consortium of local businessmen who clearly prefer a more cautious approach than their predecessors in the Boardroom.

City's problems cost them dearly. They left the First Division in 1980 and two years later arrived in the Fourth. It was always a safe bet that the return journey would take considerably longer.



If Joe Jordan is a fully paid-up member of the veteran class, his former Scotland colleague Tommy Hutchison (pictured above) must be on the point of being invited to Darby and Joan club meetings.

Only joking, Tom!

Swansea City's player-coach, whose international career should have extended to more than just 17 senior caps, is still going strong.

Hutch was 41 a few weeks back and after playing just seven League games in his side's promotion-winning campaign last season is determined to make a bigger contribution this time round.

He was on target recently to help sink Fulham and Swansea, like Bristol City a club who nearly sank under crippling debts and crashed all the way from the First Division to the Fourth in three years, are at last enjoying a revival.

I'm sure Joe and Tommy had plenty to chat about when they met up recently at Ashton Gate for a Third Division fixture which Bristol City won 2-0.

It's good to see them well to the fore in the promotion race....

Joe admitted: "The money worries are behind us. Debts have been cleared and we're reasonably sound again. But no one forgets the events of a few years ago.

"Of course we want promotion and we'll be trying our hardest to get out of the Third Division this season. But we know the danger of trying to take too many steps forward at once.

"We didn't start the season too well but we've achieved a good level of consistency in recent weeks and that has enabled us to peg back the leading teams."

Joe has made several excursions into the transfer market to reinforce his squad, with forward pair Scott McGarvey and Mark Gavin adding to a Scots colony that also includes ex-Dundee United favourite Ralph Milne and assistant Manager Jimmy Lumsden.

"There's no real significance in the fact that I signed two Scots, although it doesn't mean there won't be others in the future," laughed Joe.

All three Scots impressed in the game at Northampton. Milne snatched City's equaliser, McGarvey weighed in with 2 more to clinch the points and Gavin was left kicking himself for a hat-trick that got away.

But Joe leapt to the defence of his recent £35,000 recruit from Hearts, who scored just 84 seconds into his debut to clinch a valuable away success at Gillingham.

"Mark has been playing out of position, like today when I decided our tactics made him a better bet to play up front than myself. But I'm satisfied with what he's done and I feel sure he'll get better," added Joe.

"The same applies to Scott. He'll feel the benefit of moving to the Bristol area. He's scored four goals now and I'm confident he can keep it up."

McGarvey was once Jordan's understudy at Manchester United, the club he joined straight from school in Glasgow and for whom he was on target three times in 25 League games.

He later moved to Portsmouth after a loan spell at Wolves and was shipped off to Carlisle for another loan stint before being transferred to Grimsby, where he was unable to stop them slipping from the Second Division to the Fourth in successive seasons.

Joe said of the former Scotland Under-21 cap: "Scott has got to start maturing as a player. He's moved around and needs to settle down and work hard at his game.

"I've talked to him about this and I'm pleased to say he seems to have taken the hint. He's playing in a position I know a little bit about and I believe I can help him a lot. But only if he's willing to listen."

Still only 25, Scott has time on his side. What a pity the same couldn't be said of Joe, to whom I'm sure many Scots would send this message: "Thanks for the memory!"

BY MEL HENDERSON

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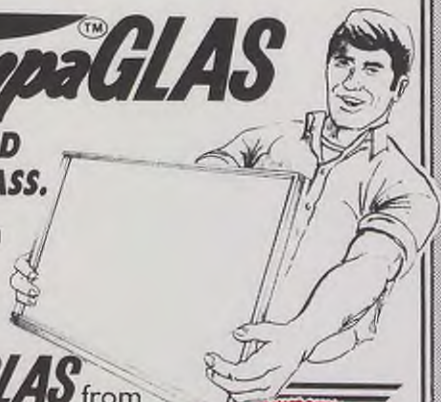
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