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No. 7

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ST JOHNSTONE v CELTIC

THE BANK OF SCOTLAND SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

SATURDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2001

McDIARMID PARK, PERTH Kick-off 3.00pm



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In the last few games we've seen some positive things, although we haven't taken any points. Nonetheless, when you're in the situation we find ourselves in, it's important to be aware of what we're doing well, as well as what we're not doing so well and look to build on the former and rectify the latter. In the games since I've arrived, with the exception of the performance at Tynecastle, I felt there were some good things in every match. You could make a case for us taking something from each other match, especially those against Rangers and Dunfermline. Last weekend, at East End Park, we were comfortable for the entire first half, yet still lost. Even then, having analysed the goals we lost, the first was arguably fortuitous in that that a mis-hit shot arrived at De Gier's feet, while the second was, regrettably, down to an individual error. Despite this, we still tried to pick things up towards the end of the game and had a wee flourish and a few attacks. For me, this is important, as it shows the players are still prepared to battle and try to get forward, even when they are losing.

In the last home game, against Rangers, we put a lot of effort into the first half and worked hard to close down the opposition. Not only that, but we also had the skill to create chances and, on another day, would have taken at least one. That kind of break is important, especially against the Old Firm. We'll need to work just as hard this afternoon, against Celtic, who will be coming off a difficult game against Juventus in the Champions League. I hope they have had a successful outcome to their first Champions League foray, but irrespective of their result on Wednesday, they'll be very tough opponents today. They have lots going for them and with the strength and skill possessed by players such as Larsson and Lambert we'll need to play even better than we did against Rangers if we are to take something from the game.

I was heartened by the full house we had at the 'meet the manager' night. I know there is a loyal, hard-core St Johnstone support and we were pleased to see so many of you at Dunfermline. It was therefore particularly annoying, when we



'I felt there were some good things in every match'

had been in the lead, not to give you that first League win we are all looking for. I stressed at the 'meet the manager' night that we are all in this together, and there will be a period, sooner than later, when we get a wee run and a few breaks. What we need above all, is the confidence to go on once we've scored a goal and look to get a second one, whilst not giving anything away at the back and in midfield.

Finally, I'm still looking for some new players for the squad - Alan Miller is getting better with every game and Mark Lynch had a good first half at Dunfermline, but one or two more new players will give a fresh impetus to the club and should help immensely as we continue to tackle the next few games. It has been a difficult run of games since I arrived, but everyone at Saints is very confident we'll turn things round.

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McDIARMID NEWS

New signing - Mark Lynch

St Johnstone have signed Manchester United's Mark Lynch in a three-month loan deal. The 20-year-old right sided midfielder went straight into the side at Dunfermline last weekend. We trust he enjoys his stay at Perth. A few games with us is surely all that is needed to propel him to Beckham-like stardom!

Changed Days

In the course of his research for the Premier A-Z series, programme contributor Paul Smith came across this quote from the Saints v Partick Thistle match programme in August 1975 which will bring either a smile to your face or a tear to your eye. "Another rise in rail fares is in the offing but, at the moment, the cheap day return from Perth to Glasgow is £2.51. Add to this the pint in the local before leaving, the 60p admission money, the half-time pie (14p at Muirton Park) and you can see that a five pound note will not stretch very far on a trip to Ibrox or Parkhead."

Change of date

The Kilmarnock away match which was due to be played on 30th January has been moved to next Saturday, 10th November.

All you wanted to know about Glentoran FC

We have been sent information about a history of Glentoran FC. Roy France has covered all 119 years of their history, including statistics, in a hardbacked book priced at £18.50 plus £4.75 p&p from Westwork Associates, Lane End, Owlthorpe Lane, Sheffield S20 5BA.



Mark Lynch

Barry back on track

The Under 18 side have had some good league results over the past couple of weeks and that is partly due to the goalscoring form of Barry Thompson who has put the injury concerns of last season behind him to get down to the business of scoring goals. Barry has scored 3 in the last two games against Motherwell and Dundee.

Former Saints doing well

A couple of football managers with Saints connections are enjoying good fortune at this stage of the season having taken their respective sides to the top of their leagues. John Connolly saw his Queen of the South side go top of the Second Division last weekend thanks to a 1-0 win over

Stranraer at Palmerston while Paul Sturrock's Plymouth Argyle side regained top spot in Division Three thanks to a win at Bristol Rovers.

Going back to that top of the table local derby game in Dumfries, some of you may have spotted the impressive attendance of 3,083 and it set us wondering what were the bigger attendances Saints had when we had our spell in the old Second Division in the mid 1980's. Well, although there was attendances of over 4,000 in matches against Dunfermline at East End Park in 85/86, it was only in the last of our seasons at that level which brought anything over 2,000 into Muirton Park. An attendance of 3,106 against Berwick Rangers was only beaten when fellow challengers Ayr United came to Perth a few weeks later and 5,109 attended the game. Both Saints and Ayr were eventually promoted.

Physio's Update

Nick Summersgill has been busy recently, unfortunately for us, and here is the latest news from the treatment table. Graeme Jones has joined fellow Geordie Craig Russell by returning to full training. Benito Kemble (ankle) and Marc McCulloch (groin) will be back to full training this weekend. Darren Jackson (back) and Paul Kane (calf) will return to training in two weeks. Jim Weir (knee) is still four weeks away from resuming training. Alan Main is progressing well and should be out of his plaster cast in three weeks time.

- Stadium Safety -

Our aim is to ensure that everyone enjoys today's match in a safe and friendly environment, therefore your co-operation and assistance will help to make sure that the game is pleasant for everyone.

In the event of an emergency within the ground announcements will be made on the public address system.

It is important that spectators listen carefully to such announcements.

In the interests of safety, please keep all gangways clear and follow the instructions of police and stewards.

For your own safety please do not jump on or climb over seats. Please leave the ground in an orderly manner.

The First Aid room is located in the West/Main Stand.

Above all, enjoy the game!



Celtic have started the new season in great form domestically, after winning the triple last year, and are, at the time of writing are 7 points ahead of second place Rangers in the SPL. Their last game in the Champions League mini league was after the deadline for this programme so I don't know if they are still in either of the European competitions, but hopefully they will still be flying the flag for Scotland.

Since last season there have been a number of new players introduced to all sections of the team. Defender **Bobo Baldé** moved to Celtic Park from Toulouse, who were in trouble financially. Baldé replaced **Ramon Vega**, whose wage demands were reportedly too large and who moved down south to Watford. Bobo signed a four year deal and made his debut in a game against Dunfermline at the beginning of

September which Celtic won 3-1 (This was the first time in their history that Celtic started the game without a Scot in the line-up - **Dmitri Kharine** was in goal). Bobo is a very physical but quick player and he scored his first goal for the club two weeks ago against Dundee Utd. At the beginning of August three players moved to Celtic. **John Hartson** is the most well known of the three and has appeared before at McDiarmid Park when he played for West Ham in a pre-season friendly. The Welsh striker, who bears a passing resemblance to Fred Macaulay, cost £6.5m in a four year deal. Midfielder **Steve Guppy** moved from Leicester for around £700,000 in a three year contract. Guppy had played for O'Neill at Wycombe and Leicester.

Momo Sylla went to Celtic Park after playing for Saints there in the opening game of the season and has signed a contract for five years. All three players moved to Celtic before the European competition deadline and Sylla probably put on his best display so far for Celtic when he came on as a sub when The Bhoys lost 3 - 0 to Porto. MoMo was very popular with the fans and the Saints players will surely be glad to have a chance to test their skills against his if he gets a game today. Hartson has been used when **Henrik Larsson** or **Chris Sutton**, the first choice strikers, have been missing. John scored his first goals, a hat trick in fact, against Dundee Utd two weeks ago when Sutton was absent because of a virus.

Early on in the season Hartson came on for an injured **Bobby Petta** and Sutton moved to play at the back; Chris played as target man, playmaker and defender all in one game. Bobby Petta has been called up to the Holland squad but has missed

playing on each occasion because he has picked up an injury.

At the end of August French goalkeeper Michael Herbert signed on a free from Paris SG; he is regarded as "one for the future"

Other changes since we last met at McDiarmid include: Defender **Alan Stubbs** returning down south to his first love, Everton, at the beginning of July.

Eyal Berkovic went to Manchester City for £1.5m and striker **Tommy Johnson** did not agree a one year deal with the club and is at Sheffield Wednesday on loan. Young striker, **Mark Burchill**, went to Portsmouth for around £600,000 (although he's now out with a long-term injury). Goalkeeper **Stewart Kerr** has gone to Wigan and has also picked up an injury. **Stephane Mahe** moved across





Shaun Maloney

Scotland to Heart of Midlothian, whilst young Celtic striker **Mickey Doyle** turned down a permanent move to Danish side AGF Aarhus where he had been on loan. **Fernando de Ornelas** has recently moved to QPR on loan.

A number of the players have tied up new deals; **Johan Mjallby** is contracted until 2004, veteran **Tom Boyd** has a one year deal (although he has damaged knee ligaments in training in October but may be back in action soon), and **Shaun Maloney** a 2 year contract. Another youngster, **Jamie Smith**, has also signed a new contract. Perhaps most importantly for the 'Tic faithful, in June **Henrik Larsson** agreed a one year extension to his contract that will keep him at the club until 2004. Winger/wing back **Didier Agathe** signed new contract in

August to keep him at the club until 2006. **Lubo Moravcik** has recently said that he wants to be coach of Slovakia rather than extending his contract with Celtic.

Morten Wieghorst, returning after a severe illness, played in pre-season friendlies in Ireland and **Stilian Petrov** has returned to the first team after breaking his leg in the second game here last season.

Celtic probably played their best football of the

season so far against Hibs at the end of August. Afterwards, Paul Lambert reckoned that the first half was the 'perfect 45 minutes' and that **Chris Sutton** 'had a magnificent game'.

Lennon and Lambert are the engine room for Celtic, running the midfield with Lennon snapping like a terrier at the opposition and Lambert rarely, if ever, giving away possession.

Manager **Martin O'Neill** has had some encouraging words for one of his young strikers - **Shaun Maloney**, who O'Neill reckons has terrific attitude and a great ability. The eighteen year old scored his first senior goal, against Dundee in the middle of September, and scored the last goal in the 5-1 demolition of Dundee Utd two weeks ago. Larsson, as expected, is the top

goalscorer so far with 10 goals in total; Sutton, Moravcik and Petrov are equal second with 4 goals apiece. This season Petrov's ability to hit a dead-ball accurately and with venom have been noted on several occasions - principally by the opposition defensive wall!

Martin O'Neill's team is defined by physical strength in all departments - from the obvious vigour of players like Mjallby (particularly dangerous at corners and surprisingly quick on his feet for such a big man) and Baldé to the determination of Larsson which is sometimes overlooked because of his skill in goalscoring. This determination helps them keep going, right up to the last minute, as they demonstrated last week with their injury-time win over Kilmarnock at Celtic Park. If Saints are to take anything from today's game they will have to be at the top of their form and hope for a wee break (or preferably lots of them!).



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