



Celtic

Programme No. 9

v Hearts



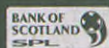
Scottish Premierleague
Celtic Park, Saturday Oct 16, 2004
Kick-off 3.00pm

£2

CARLING



Celtic





Carling are proud to be supporters of Celtic F.C.

LOVEFOOTBALL



IT seems like an eternity since we defeated Dundee United at Tannadice to keep a few points ahead in the SPL table

In a wonderful first-half attacking display, when we looked like scoring every time we went forward, we managed three goals, two from Chris Sutton and one from Stilian Petrov and, in the end, won very well.

I was naturally concerned beforehand about the game against Ian McCall's fired-up side, coming back from our midweek exploits in Milan, but we got into our stride early and took the three points on offer.

A few nights earlier, we took on AC Milan in the San Siro Stadium in the second group game of the Champions League.

A tentative first-half performance gave way to an incredible second-half display. We totally dominated a team that, only 17 months earlier, had won the Champions League, and when Stan Varga equalised halfway through the second-half, there would have been few people in the stadium who would have thought we hadn't deserved it.

Backed all the way by a very vocal Celtic support on the evening, we were in full flow. Unfortunately, and undeservedly I thought, we conceded a goal with just a few minutes to go, which proved to be the decisive blow.

The third goal, a deflection from a free-kick, gave the game an unreal scoreline. When a few minutes later, the referee blew for full-time, there was natural disappointment at the result.



However, the caustic abuse which followed this "absolute catastrophe" in Milan was, I thought, uncalled for but rather predictable.

'A tentative first-half performance gave way to an incredible second-half display and we dominated a team who, only seventeen months earlier, had won the Champions League'

Still, I suppose it must speak volumes for this Celtic team that, having carried the European flag for Scotland and the SPL so successfully and so alone in recent seasons, losing so narrowly in the San Siro in a wonderfully entertaining game, can be classified as an "unmitigated disaster."

A lot of our players have been on international duty this last fortnight and we sit and wait with crossed fingers that players arrive back in reasonable health.

But it is generally too much to ask that everyone arrives back uninjured and that has been the case this time around.

However, regardless of the state of health at the club, we have a very big game this afternoon against Hearts.

Craig Levein and his backroom staff have done a wonderful job in keeping Hearts to the fore in recent seasons and their magnificent result in Braga, which went relatively unnoticed, gives them a deserved number of big games in the UEFA Cup, to which their efforts have entitled them.

However, our aim is to take all three points from today's game and that is what we will be striving to do.

I understand that many supporters will already be looking forward to the Champions League game against Shakhtar Donetsk in Ukraine on Wednesday. It is an important match and one that will be extremely difficult for us.

Your support for the team in every game, home and away, in Scotland and in Europe, is something the whole squad appreciates and that backing will be needed this afternoon as we bid for another three league points.

T. McCall



Formed: 1888
Stadium: Celtic Park (capacity 60,506)
Home strip: Green/white hooped shirts, white shorts, white socks
Away strip: Green shirts, white shorts and green socks
Third strip: Black shirts, black shorts and socks with gold trim
Record attendance: 92,000 (v Rangers, 1938)
Record victory: 11-0 (v Dundee, 1895)
Record defeat: 0-8 (v Motherwell, 1937)
Most league goals (1 season): 50, Jimmy McGrory, 1935/36
Most Premier/SPL goals (1 season): 35, Brian McClair 1986/87, Henrik Larsson 2000/01
Website: www.celticfc.net

HONOURS
Scottish League (39)
 1892/93, 1893/94, 1895/96, 1897/98, 1904/05, 1905/06, 1906/07, 1907/08, 1908/09, 1909/10, 1913/14, 1914/15, 1915/16, 1916/17, 1918/19, 1921/22, 1925/26, 1935/36, 1937/38, 1953/54, 1965/66, 1966/67, 1967/68, 1968/69, 1969/70, 1970/71, 1971/72, 1972/73, 1973/74, 1976/77, 1978/79, 1980/81, 1981/82, 1985/86, 1987/88, 1997/98, 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2003/2004
Scottish Cup (32)
 1892, 1899, 1900, 1904, 1907, 1908, 1911, 1912, 1914, 1923, 1925, 1927, 1931, 1933, 1937, 1951, 1954, 1965, 1967, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1980, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1995, 2001, 2004
League Cup (12)
 1956/57, 1957/58, 1965/66, 1966/67, 1967/68, 1968/69, 1969/70, 1974/75, 1982/83, 1997/98, 1999/2000, 2000/2001
European Cup (1) 1967 **Coronation Cup (1)** 1953



CELTIC plc DIRECTORS Brian Quinn, Peter Lawwell, Eric Riley, Dermot Desmond, Tom Allison, Eric Hagman
CFAC DIRECTORS Peter Lawwell, Eric Riley, John Keane, Michael McDonald, Kevin Sweeney
MANAGER Martin O'Neill
ASSISTANT MANAGER John Robertson

COACH Steve Walford
HEAD OF YOUTH Tommy Burns
YOUTH TEAM COACH Willie McStay
UNDER-21 COACH Kenny McDowall
PHYSIOTHERAPISTS Tim Williamson & Gavin McCarthy
CLUB DOCTOR Roddy Macdonald
KIT CONTROLLER John Clark

Celtic Football Club, Celtic Park, Glasgow G40 3RE 0845 671 1888

CELTIC

HEARTS

Momo Sylla	3	1	Craig Gordon
Jackie McNamara	4	2	Alan Maybury
Joos Valgaeren	5	3	Patrick Kisnorbo
Bobo Balde	6	4	Steven Pressley
Juninho	7	5	Kevin McKenna
Alan Thompson	8	6	Andy Webster
Chris Sutton	9	7	Dennis Wyness
John Hartson	10	8	Phil Stamp
Stephen Pearson	11	9	Mark de Vries
David Fernandez	12	10	Paul Hartley
Paul Lambert	14	11	Neil MacFarlane
Bobby Petta	15	12	Robbie Neilson
Ulrik Laursen	16	13	Teuvo Moilanen
Didier Agathe	17	14	Jamie McAllister
Neil Lennon	18	15	Ramon Pereira
Stilian Petrov	19	16	Stephen Simmons
Robert Douglas	20	17	Graham Weir
Magnus Hedman	21	18	Neil Janczyk
David Marshall	22	19	Joe Hamill
Stanislav Varga	23	20	Robert Sloan
Henri Camara	27	21	Christophe Berra
Shaun Maloney	29	22	Michael Stewart
Ross Wallace	33	24	David McGeown
Craig Beattie	37	25	Conall Murtagh
Rocco Quinn	38	28	Craig Sives
John Kennedy	41	35	Calum Elliot
Stephen McManus	44		
Kevin McBride	45		
Aiden McGeady	46		
Michael McGovern	47		
Scott Cuthbert	49		

TODAY'S OFFICIALS	RECENT FORM	FORTHCOMING FIXTURES
Referee: Kenny Clark Assistant Referees: Tom Murphy, Charlie Smith Fourth Official: Steve Conroy	Scottish Premierleague, Oct 3, 2004 DUNDEE UTD 0 v 3 CELTIC (sutton2, Petrov) UEFA Champions League, Sept 29, 2004 AC MILAN 3 v CELTIC 1 (Varga) Scottish Premierleague, Sept 25, 2004 CELTIC 3 v 0 DUNFERMLINE (Camara2, Varga) CIS Cup, Third Round, Sept 21, 2004 CELTIC 8 v 1 FALKIRK (Sylla, Wallace 3, Balde, Lambert, McManus, McGeady) Scottish Premierleague, Sept 19, 2004 HIBS 2 v 2 CELTIC (Camara, Hartson)	UEFA Champions League, SHAKHTAR DONETSK v CELTIC WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 7.45PM Scottish Premierleague, LIVINGSTON v CELTIC SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER 2.00pm Scottish Premierleague, CELTIC v ABERDEEN WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER 7.45pm Scottish Premierleague, MOTHERWELL v CELTIC SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER 3.00pm
CLUB SPONSORS	 	



Picking up the pace

Interview: STEPHEN SULLIVAN

Striker David Fernandez is aiming to win fitness battle after his injury nightmare

DAVID FERNANDEZ this week brought to an end three months of frustration when he returned to full training for the first time since damaging a tendon in his right shoulder in the first of Celtic's pre-season friendlies.

That injury was sustained just a few minutes into the Hoops' visit to Fulham's Craven Cottage and, for the affable Spaniard, it represented just the kind of comeback he'd been desperate to avoid.

Fernandez had, after all, returned following the summer and a spell on loan with former club Livingston looking lean, fit and ready for the challenge of kick-starting a Hoops career which has never really sparked into life, and was aching to make a favourable first impression.

Yet it's to the former Deportivo La Coruna striker's immense credit that he has remained positive, focussed and generally fit since his untimely setback and, while unlikely to feature prominently this afternoon, he's simply delighted to be back in the reckoning.

He said: "I had a chance to train with the under-21s towards the end of last week and did a light session with some of the boys on Monday, but Thursday was my first day back with the full squad since

pre-season. Just being back out there will help me so much because you always know that, with the quality of players we have here, the quality and intensity of the training will be tremendous.

"That's great from my point of view because it means I'll be able to get used to the pace of the games quicker. Really, I'm just looking forward to getting out there again. I feel good, and it's always exciting when you're getting ready to start again.

"Having to go off in my first game back was so disappointing because I had worked really hard over the summer to come back fit because I knew that it was my big opportunity. Pre-season is the time when every player has a chance of playing and impressing the

manager, and it's also a chance to get used to the pace of the games before the season starts.

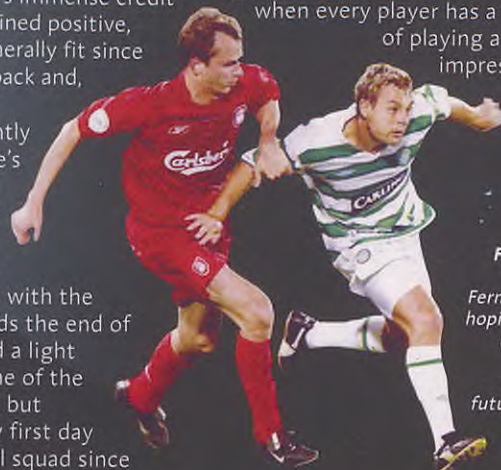
"But there's no point in getting too down about these things. You have to stay positive, and I've been lucky to have great help from Roddy (Macdonald) and all the physios. They've been great with me and I'm sure they're as pleased as I am that I'm fit again."

Acceptance didn't come so easy for Fernandez at first, though, principally because the injury, like so many others, initially appeared innocuous enough to barely merit concern.

"I thought it was nothing," he admitted, reflecting on the moment he landed awkwardly on the turf. "There was pain right away, but I kept playing because I thought it was one of those things that would just go away.

"Even though I had to come off, we still thought it had just been a heavy fall at first. I even started to feel better in the next two days and started training again when we got to America. But I think Roddy realised something wasn't right when it started to get sore again, and it was when he sent me to see a specialist after we came back that I found out how bad it was.

"It could have been worse, of course. I was still able to run and



FIGHTING FIT: Fernandez is hoping to be a part of Martin O'Neill's future plans



"THE INJURY HASN'T STOPPED ME FROM DOING WORK AT THE GYM AND MY FITNESS LEVEL IS GOOD"

do a lot of training, so it wasn't anywhere near as bad as a knee injury or anything like that, but it was frustrating not to be able to work with the rest of lads. But you just have to face setbacks like that and work hard to get back."

Certainly, he has rarely been away from the Celtic Park gym over the past three months and, despite being laid low with a virus earlier this week, refused to allow his return to full training to be postponed.

"I didn't feel well for a day or two, but I didn't want it to let it disrupt my progress," he said. "I've been running for two hours almost every day for the past three months, so my general fitness is quite good."

"I've been lucky in that sense because the injury hasn't stopped me from doing a lot of work in the gym and, to be honest, my fitness level now is better than it used to be. All I need now is just to get used to pace of the games and the only way I can do that is by playing."

His general fitness may be at a high level, but even Fernandez



himself is realistic enough to admit that, barring a late injury crisis, he's highly unlikely to be involved against Hearts this afternoon. The Spaniard does believe, however, that he's ready to make a serious and concerted bid for first-team football at Celtic Park, with proving his many doubters wrong high on the agenda.

He said: "I just want to play well and, hopefully, the manager will give me a chance to do that in the first team. I love it at Celtic, and I want to stay and prove to everyone that I can be a good player for this team. I think it helped me going on loan to Livingston, but I wouldn't want to say too much. It was a good experience and I think it helped my confidence a lot, but I am still the same player I was before I left - no

better, no worse. It was important for me to play some games, though, because it's difficult to get into pace of things, particularly here, when you've not been playing.

"I've spoken to the manager and I know he's a fair guy. I'm obviously hoping to play as soon as possible, but realistically I think it will take me about two weeks before I'm totally ready. I've been out for three months, though, so another week or two won't be too big a deal. The most important thing is to get properly fit and

obviously if the manager wants me to play in Tuesday's under-21s game, I'll be available."

It's likely to be the role of spectator, then, that Fernandez occupies this afternoon, and he expects to take in a closely contested match against a side genuinely worthy of the Hoops' respect.

"It will be a difficult game for the lads, definitely," he said. "Hearts are always strong and well organised, and they have been playing really well, especially in Europe. But, at Celtic Park, we are always the favourites, and we should win the game if we play well."

"I JUST WANT TO PLAY WELL AND HOPEFULLY THE MANAGER WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE"

