



HIBERNIAN

18



75

CELTIC



2017/18 BETFRED CUP
SEMI-FINAL
SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER, 2017
KICK-OFF 12:15PM
HAMPDEN PARK

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY
PROGRAMME / £5





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WELCOME

On behalf of the Scottish Professional Football League, a very warm welcome to this afternoon's Betfred Cup semi-final at Hampden Park.

This is the second season of the revamped competition and the 72nd overall - the tournament was played for the first time back in 1946/47. We are again delighted to have the backing of sponsor Betfred and broadcast partner BT Sport, who are the exclusive broadcaster of the Betfred Cup and, by the time of November's final, will have shown 13 ties live this season.

On Saturday lunchtime, Hibernian take on holders Celtic - who got their hands on the silverware by beating Aberdeen here 11 months ago - and are still on that remarkable unbeaten domestic run under Brendan Rodgers. Hibernian, who came close to ending that sequence at Celtic Park at the end of September, are three-time winners of the League Cup and reached the final in 2015/16, finishing

"THIS YEAR'S BETFRED CUP KICKED OFF IN MID-JULY AND HAS ALREADY PRODUCED PLENTY OF GREAT GAMES, DRAMA AND LOTS OF GOALS"

This year's Betfred Cup kicked off at Somerset Park on a Friday night in mid-July with a terrific Ayrshire derby and has already produced plenty of great games, drama and lots of goals. Ayr United, Falkirk and Motherwell all enjoyed 100 per cent records in the group stage and the many permutations on matchday five saw Peterhead the unfortunate team to miss out on the last 16 despite amassing nine points.

Two Dundee derbies have been among the highlights of a competition that has been well received by players, managers and supporters and there is no doubt that the condensed nature of the Betfred Cup adds to the excitement. At stake in two massive matches this weekend is a place in the final, back at the National Stadium on Sunday 26 November when the first trophy of 2017/18 will be up for grabs.

runners-up to Ross County.

The second semi-final on Sunday afternoon pits Rangers against Motherwell. The Ibrox club have won this trophy a record 27 times, while the men from Fir Park are aiming to take a step closer to what would be a second League Cup triumph - their first was back in 1950.

I would like to thank Peter Dallas and his staff at Hampden Park for their assistance in staging two high-profile fixtures in little more than 24 hours. Big crowds are anticipated for both games and I would like to thank the supporters who have journeyed to the south side of Glasgow from near and far to attend the semi-finals. Enjoy the football and good luck to all four teams.

Best wishes,

Neil Doncaster, SPFL Chief Executive



FROM OUR SPONSOR

A warm welcome to Hampden Park for the semi-finals of this year's Betfred Cup.

It's the second year of our sponsorship and the competition continues to flourish in its new format that has rapidly become very popular with both the clubs and fans alike and we are delighted to be associated with this prestigious trophy.

The group stages in July certainly gave me a much-needed 'summer football' fix and we now look forward to this weekend's matches, which should prove to be both entertaining and competitive.

The quarter-finals produced plenty of goals with Hibernian edging past Livingston 3-2, Rangers beating Partick Thistle 3-1 after extra-time, holders Celtic putting four past Dundee and Motherwell, defeating last season's runners-up Aberdeen 3-0. So let's hope the free-scoring football continues at Hampden this afternoon.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Scottish Professional Football League and the staff of Hampden Park whose continued co-operation make this sponsorship such a pleasure and a very special mention to our main broadcast partner BT Sport who, once again, have covered the whole competition with such enthusiasm.

My thanks obviously extend to all of the media and press, both broadcast and print, who continue to report on Scottish football with such passion.

Finally, a huge thank you to you the fans for your support of the Betfred Cup and whilst I realise that half of you must go home disappointed this weekend I hope the games provide some terrific memories.

It's the passion of the fans that should help provide us with two excellent semi-finals.

Good luck



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UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

The Scottish Professional Football League will not tolerate unacceptable conduct at Hampden Park or any of the stadiums where its matches are played.

Unacceptable conduct is conduct which is violent or disorderly. Violent conduct includes any actual, attempted or threatened physical violence against any person, or intentional damage to property.

Disorderly conduct includes: Conduct which stirs up or sustains, or is likely or is designed to stir up or sustain, hatred or ill will against or towards individuals or groups of people based on their membership of presumed membership of the following categories:

- Gender, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin

- Membership, or presumed membership, of a religious group or of a social or cultural group with perceived religious affiliation
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity
- Disability

Or against an individual who is or is presumed to be a member of such group using threatening, abusive or insulting words or conduct; displaying writing or any other thing which is threatening, abusive or insulting; using words or conduct or displaying any writing or other thing which indicates support for, or affiliation to, or celebration of, or opposition to an organisation or group proscribed in terms of the Terrorism Act 2000.

"Presumed" above means presumed by the person or

persons engaged in the conduct. "Religious group" above means a group of persons defined by reference to their religious belief or lack of religious belief, membership of or adherence to a church or religious organisation, support for the culture and traditions of a church or religious organisation and/or participation in activities associated with such a culture or such traditions. "Transgender identity" means any one or more of transvestism, transsexualism, inter-sexuality or change of gender. "Disability" means physical or mental impairment of any kind.

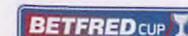
Any person engaging in unacceptable conduct may be subject to removal from the Stadium, report to the police and possible criminal proceedings.

IT'S HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The Hampden experience

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The Hampden Experience



SCENESETTER

Last month, Hibernian were 10 minutes from ending Celtic's long-standing domestic unbeaten run, before having to settle for a draw. Can they go one better today?

It's only three weeks since Celtic and Hibernian met in a Ladbrokes Premiership match just a few miles from here at Parkhead and we'll be in for a lunchtime treat if the teams serve up something similar today. It finished 2-2 in the East End of Glasgow as Callum McGregor and John McGinn traded doubles in a compelling contest.

Celtic have since extended their unbeaten domestic run to an astonishing 59 matches - 58 of them under Brendan Rodgers - and beat Dundee 1-0 last weekend thanks to Olivier Ntcham's long-range strike to stay top of the table, on goal difference from Aberdeen. The Hoops weren't at their best but it was a much-changed line-up, with Wednesday's Champions

League tie against Bayern Munich in Germany in mind.

The Parkhead club are the current holders of the Betfred Cup, having comprehensively beaten Aberdeen 3-0 at the National Stadium 11 months ago after Moussa Dembele's late goal accounted for Rangers in the semi-finals on this weekend a year ago. This is Celtic's 42nd League Cup semi-final appearance and they are chasing a 17th success in this tournament. They have won it three times in the last decade - beating Rangers in 2008/09, Dundee United in 2014/15 and Aberdeen last year.

Celtic have coasted into the last four of this season's competition, thrashing Kilmarnock 5-0 at Parkhead in the last 16 then putting four goals

past Dundee on a rain-lashed evening at Dens Park in September's quarter-final but Hibernian will expect to provide a sterner test.

Neil Lennon's team went down 1-0 to Aberdeen last Saturday in a tight game but that was only the second defeat they have suffered this term since returning to the top flight - the other was against Hamilton Accies back in August. They topped Betfred Cup Group D, ahead of Ross County on goal difference despite losing a shoot-out in Dingwall, scoring 13 goals against Montrose, Arbroath and Alloa Athletic and conceding just one. Hibs then hammered Ayr United 5-0 at Easter Road in round two before being given a scare by Livingston in the quarter-final in the

