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HIBERNIAN VERSUS CELTIC



WILLIAM HILL SCOTTISH CUP FINAL

SUNDAY 26TH MAY 2013 | HAMPDEN PARK | KICK OFF 3PM



William HILL
SCOTTISH CUP

HON BY

QUEEN'S PARK FOOTBALL CLUB	1891-92
DUNDEE FOOTBALL CLUB	1892-93
SCHEFFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB	1893-94
HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN FOOTBALL CLUB	1894-95
DUNDEE FOOTBALL CLUB	1895-96
DUNDEE FOOTBALL CLUB	1896-97
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Scottish FA
Hampden Park
Glasgow
G42 9AY
0141 616 6000

SCOTTISH FA ONLINE:
Email: info@scottishfa.co.uk
Web: www.scottishfa.co.uk
Twitter: @Scottish_FA
Facebook: facebook.com/scotlandnationalteam

OFFICE BEARERS:
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Campbell Ogilvie
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Andrew Sleight and Tom Wright

COMMISSIONING EDITOR:
Donnie Esplin
Additional contributions from
Avin McCafferty and Tom Wright

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The year was 1923 and 21 long years had passed since Hibernian Football Club had last won the Scottish Cup. A barren spell, indeed. However, the final against Celtic at Hampden Park gave Hibs manager Alex Maley the chance to get the better of his older brother, Willie, with the opportunity to bring the cup back east for the first time in more than two decades.

The late Dan McMichael, legendary Hibs manager who won the Scottish Cup in 1902, still had an imprint on the team of the early 1920s with at least five first-team regulars having been signed by the Irishman.

Britain was still recovering from the Great War and money was tight at Easter Road at the start of the 1922/23 season. The club scrapped its reserve team but Maley could call on soon-to-be Scotland goalkeeper Willie Harper, right-half Peter Kerr, who played in Hibs' previous Scottish Cup final appearance in 1914, where the Easter Road side lost 4-1 in a replay against Celtic at Ibrox. Hugh Shaw played at left-half; his legendary status at Hibs would be achieved as manager of the club's most successful side which included the Famous Five forward line of Gordon Smith, Bobby Johnstone, Lawrie Reilly, Eddie Turnbull and Willie Ormond, which, among other things, won the title in 1948, 1951 and 1952.

Maley did manage to squeeze money out of the directors to sign Jimmy McColl from Partick Thistle. McColl won the Scottish Cup with Celtic against Hibs in 1914 and could have returned to Parkhead but opted for Easter Road instead. The signing was described as a masterstroke and so it proved given the centre-forward's impact on the Scottish Cup campaign.

Clackmannan were Hibs' first-round opponents in January with the tie switched to Easter Road after the Eastern League club accepted a financial offer. McColl hit two goals in a 4-0 win.

Two weeks later, Hibernian could only draw 0-0 at home to Peebles Rovers but the day could have been worse given Bo'ness knocked out Hearts and Rangers fell to Ayr United. McColl was again on the scoresheet as Hibs won the replay 3-0 in a game also at Easter Road.

Queen's Park - 10-times winners of the competition - were Hibs' next opponents and 22,000 packed into Easter Road to see the home team, refreshed after a trip to Gullane in the build-up, win 2-0. Yet again McColl was on the scoresheet along with the diminutive Jimmy Dunn, who would be the sole Hibs representative in the Wembley Wizards Scotland side which beat England 5-1 in 1928 and who is a distant relative of current Hibs player Alex Harris.

The Leith team again used Gullane to prepare for the quarter-final home tie against Aberdeen. Maley had decided to focus on the Scottish Cup and rested players for league games in between and that paid off with another 2-0 win as Dunn added to his Scottish Cup tally while John Walker chipped in with the other.



The semi-final draw saw Hibs and Third Lanark paired together and Motherwell and Celtic in the other tie.

Again Hibs prepared at Gullane for the game, which was to be played at Tynecastle. There was no surprise that Hibeers fans outnumbered supporters of the Glasgow club among the 39,000 inside the Gorgie ground to witness the smallest man on the field, Dunn, head in the winner after 15 minutes.

Hibernian's mission to re-establish themselves as 'the premier football club of the Irish in Scotland' would be complete if they could beat Celtic in the final at the end of March.

It would be the Leithers' third Scottish Cup final appearance against Celtic, having won at Celtic Park in the 1902 final before losing at Ibrox in 1914.

Around 30,000 supporters travelled from the capital to cheer on the Edinburgh greens, among them an unusually high proportion of females for that time. One newspaper stated: "No football club in Scotland has such numerous faithful supporters of the fair sex than Hibernian" and none of them had cause for concern among the traditionally male crowd as 68 years before Jim and Tommy McLearn's 'family final' between Dundee United and Motherwell, Alex and Willie Maley agreed the game would be played "in a most sportsman-like manner".

The final failed to live up to its billing. Harry Ritchie missed an early chance for Hibernian before Celtic took control. The game, though, was settled by a mistake. A cross into the box caught out two Hibeers defenders and keeper Harper, who played his first two games for Scotland earlier in the month, hesitated, allowing Celtic centre-forward Joe Cassidy to head in.

The error was harsh on the man who saved the club on so many occasions that the men from the east were occasionally described at the time as "Harper and 10 others". In front of 82,000 packed into the national stadium, Hibs tried in vain to equalise, John Walker hit the side netting while a penalty claim for handball was waved away.

Willie Maley had won another Scottish Cup; one of 30 major trophies clinched in his 43-year reign. Young brother Alex would have to think again.

A deflated Hibernian still had to finish the league campaign and did so by beating champions Rangers before clinching the East of Scotland Shield with a 2-1 win at Tynecastle.

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ROAD TO REDEMPTION

Scotland on Sunday chief sportswriter **Tom English** previews today's William Hill Scottish Cup final

Twelve months ago we gathered in this very place to see if Hibs could break the hoodoo of the ages, to see if the Scottish Cup could finally be won after a century and more of trying. We know what happened. A year has passed and the memory of the massacre against Hearts cannot have dimmed. You'd imagine that Pat Fenlon wouldn't want it to.

The embarrassment of losing 5-1 to your city rivals in the biggest derby in history could come in useful this afternoon in terms of motivation. It's not hard to imagine Fenlon, in his direct Dublin way, reminding the survivors of the wreckage how they felt a year ago and how they owe it to their supporters to make sure such a fate doesn't befall them again. And it could. Fenlon knows it and so will his players. Celtic have all the tools to do the job. The last time these sides met was back in April and Neil Lennon's team won in a canter; 3-0 going on more. Hibs hardly fired a shot in anger that day.

For Hibs, this season has been better than last season and better than the one before that, but that's not saying much. They have lost fewer games and garnered more points, but they've been poor for the most part. No top-six finish again and no complaints either. They just haven't been nearly good enough.

Once again, like last season, it is the William Hill Scottish Cup that has sustained them. Or, more to the point, Leigh Griffiths. Without the devilish brilliance of Griffiths the season could have been a catastrophe. Griffiths scored three goals against Kilmarnock in the quarter-final of this competition and two more in that heart-stopper of a semi with Falkirk. He has scored more goals in a single SPL season, and 28 in total so far, than any Hibs striker ever, including Derek Riordan and Steven Fletcher.

