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Sunday 3rd February, 2013

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A warm welcome to everyone associated with Celtic FC. Your visit today is historic. Nothing to do with Celtic coming here as Scottish Champions, nothing to do with Raith Rovers hosting a match against one of the top sixteen teams in Europe, nothing even to do with the unlikely circumstance where we play Celtic twice in the one season in two different cup competitions. I refer to this being the time when we at Kirkcaldy have the opportunity to match Elgin City, Peterhead, Arbroath, Berwick - and others too numerous to mention - in having a live match televised from our home ground. We feel that we have now arrived!

So, as well as welcoming the Board, Management, Players and Supporters of Celtic, we also say a BIG 'hello' to our national Broadcasting Corporation. They, too, are MOST welcome and we trust they are looked after and loved.

Sell-outs are rare indeed at Kirkcaldy. Generally, they are a rare commodity in Scottish football - with one or two exceptions, of course! It was good of John Robertson to point out to Sportsound listeners, a few weeks back, that we could get more people in here if we used our railway stand. Just a pity that the costs involved in re-instating seats that we don't need would far outweigh the possibility of filling them, perhaps once in a decade.



What our railway stand demonstrates graphically is the reality of 10,000 seater stadiums, compliant with SPL regulations.....

That brings us on neatly to the current discussions, debate, controversy.....call it what you will, concerning the shape of our glorious game moving forward. Everyone has an opinion - no doubt, genuinely held - but sometimes it is lacking in an in-depth understanding of all the facts. There is a tendency to hark back to two divisions, home and away matches. There is little or no understanding of the financial gulf that exists within Scottish Football now, compared to the games prior to the formation of the SPL. There is no understanding of



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the effect of the Bosman ruling on small clubs like Raith Rovers, as well as no understanding that the introduction of transfer windows, years ago, constricted the abilities of small clubs with no money to effectively balance their books by selling players when necessary.

And if you did have some success on the pitch and moved upwards in the league structure, it suddenly became essential to have all-seater stadia, under-soil heating, drug-testing rooms and media facilities. When we were within touching distance of the SPL, two seasons back, the financial benefits we would have accrued would all have had to be spent on infrastructure. We would have gone up as cannon fodder.....or 'Dunfermline' as some Rovers wags might say! Our support for the proposed changes in structure have received comments suggesting our proposals are being financially driven. Some of those commentators have more than enough of their own financial challenges to sort out rather than guide us on the preferred outcome. We do continue to try and manage our ever tightening purse strings always ensuring that our staff and players are paid in timely fashion.

Change is much needed within Scottish Football. The proposals, recently outlined, have much to commend them. Full details, at the time of writing, are not yet available. However, one governing body, better financial distribution, a

common sense approach on ground requirements linked to SFA licensing criteria, more opportunities for promotion (if you're good enough), a pyramid system at the 3rd tier, commercial /sponsorship opportunities spinning-off from having a complete package of Scottish Football - all of this, in my opinion, is real progress and innovative in its way.

There has to be compromise in this life. No party in any business transaction will get all they desire. This holds good whether in business, diplomacy, politics.....or even Scottish Football!

Are you a glass half full type of person or is your one always half empty? Food - or drink - for thought, perhaps!

We all hope for a cracking cup-tie today. There is a huge difference between the sides - players, support, infrastructure and finances. That said, we get on with it and deal with it.

The Board of RRFC was well looked after at Celtic Park last year. We can but envy the facilities and the stadium itself. We will do our best, with what we have here, to reciprocate the hospitality we received. A draw would be a great result! (But don't tell Grant Murray I said that!)

Enjoy the game.



Over the last few weeks, there's a lot of work been going on around the Club, both on and off the pitch, to prepare for this Cup tie. What's the atmosphere been like?

Obviously for the players and the coaching staff, as we've been training and playing games every week since the draw was made, we've had little time to think about today's tie against Celtic until the last few days. However, I'd be kidding myself if I said this game hasn't been in the players' minds at some time over the last few weeks. The fact that the draw for this round was made before we were even through the previous tie against Deveronvale meant that it's been in the players' thoughts for a long time. It's difficult not to let your mind wander ahead to such a big match. However, we've tried to be professional and concentrate on the next league game every week but the closer you get to the tie the harder that becomes. Players are only

human!

On the non-playing side, everyone around the Club has had a huge lift from the tie. We've got the top team in Scotland coming to Stark's Park, along with BBC Scotland, so it has given everyone a huge lift. It's going to be an exciting day - a lot of supporters coming to the game will never have seen some of the Celtic players, other than on TV. So, it's exciting for everyone - players, Raith Rovers staff and supporters. It has given the whole club a boost.

You played Celtic earlier in the season, in the League Cup, in Glasgow. What did you learn from that match?

One thing we learned from that game was that, although we thought we played well and we were pleased to score and get the score back to 1-1, from an attacking point of view, when Celtic play well they are almost unstoppable. Better teams than Raith Rovers have found that out this season. One thing that stood out was the form of Gary Hooper. He scored all four goals and the papers the next day were all about him being called up to the England team. We'd seen close up how good he and the rest of the team were and it showed to us the gulf in resources available to the two teams. Celtic is a massive Club. They have huge resources and they are involved in big games regularly, with an enormous squad of quality players. We know that they could put out fringe players and still make it difficult for us. However, I don't expect that to be the case. Celtic as a Club and Neil Lennon as a manager



want to win every game they play and they want to win every competition they enter. The Scottish Cup is an important trophy and I expect Neil Lennon to put out a strong squad. So, without a doubt, we will have to face another match like the one last September.

What about Neil Lennon? Still a young manager, like yourself, do you admire how he has gone about his job?

I think Neil has gone about his job very professionally. He has made the transfer from player to manager well. His time as a player with the Club clearly helps him understand what Celtic is all about - what the supporters look for and want - and that has helped him make that transition so well. On the pitch, Neil was uncompromising and a winner and, as a manager, it's clear he is no different.

As a player, you played in the premier league many times against Celtic. Any standout memories of games against them?

I've a few memories of games against them - some good and some bad - but two stand out. As a player, it's always a massive game and you know it's going to be a huge task to take anything from the game. In one match, when I played for Hearts, we took the lead early on and I thought, "It's going to be our day". I thought we had a real chance. We eventually lost 6-1! I suppose it was like poking a sleeping bear with a stick! However, in another match, again when I was with Hearts, we were 2-0 down early

on but eventually we ran out 3-2 winners. Almost all of the games I've played against the Old Firm are good to look back on.

It will be a capacity crowd and, for the first time ever, a game will be televised live from Stark's Park. How do you think that will affect the players and the crowd?

One important factor is the early kick off. That means neither players nor supporters have a long time to think about the game when they get up in the morning, as they do on a normal Saturday. All players are different and some get more nervous before a match than others. One thing is for sure. When they run out to warm up and then they run out for kick off, they will know they are in a big game. There will be great atmosphere and noise and, as a player, there is nothing better. The fact that there is a full house and the match is being beamed live around the world brings more than enough incentive for players to do well. My experience is that players always give their best in these circumstances. I'm sure that the players of both teams will respond well to the occasion and create a match worth watching. I'm also confident that the players who pull on a Raith Rovers jersey won't let themselves or Raith Rovers down on the day. This game presents us with a huge challenge but we will be well prepared. When the players cross the white line, it's eleven against eleven, it's the Scottish Cup and absolutely anything can happen.

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Raith Rovers v Celtic Scottish Cup Head to Head



Raith Rovers have met Celtic eight times in Scottish Cup.

22/02/1908 Scottish Cup 3rd Round
Raith Rovers 0 Celtic 3
Attendance: 14,000

This 3rd round tie was played after Rovers had beaten Inverness Thistle and then Partick Thistle 2-0 in a replay. It was reported in the local press that there had been a frenzied week of activity at Stark's Park to prepare the ground for the visit of Celtic. Additional banking had been made at the railway side of the ground to increase the capacity to 23,000. Unfortunately, 'wild weather' reduced the anticipated record crowd. A sleet storm and high winds spoilt the game. Celtic, through two goals by "Napoleon" McMenemy and Willie Kivlichan, beat the plucky Rovers team. The Club was happy to report a sum of £282.00 as gate receipts.

24/02/1923 Scottish Cup 4th Round
Celtic 1 Raith Rovers 0
Attendance: 31,000

Rovers had played 2nd Division, Dunfermline Athletic, in the previous round and had won 3-0. The previous season, the Rovers had finished 3rd in the top Scottish League, sitting just behind the champions, Celtic, and runners-up, Glasgow Rangers. In the Rovers' starting line-up was Scottish International, Dave Morris, as well as future International and Wembley wizard, 19-year old Alex James.

In a tight game, a Moyes' own goal was enough to see Celtic through.

31/03/1951 Scottish Cup Semi-Final
Raith Rovers 2 Celtic 3
(Hampden) Attendance: 84,640

Rovers had reached this semi-final by beating Dundee at Dens Park 2-1 with two Willie Penman goals. In the semi, the clubs traded goals before Celtic's Charlie Tully scored a contentious winner. Most who witnessed the game felt Rovers were robbed of a replay, although most (if not all) conceded Celtic were the better team.

Earlier in the season, Rovers had won 3-2 at Celtic Park in a league match. There was also a 2-2 draw in a League Cup match at Celtic Park. What made this score-line so remarkable was that it was played in the days before substitutes and the afore-mentioned forward, Willie Penman, played the last twenty five minutes in goal, when Rovers' keeper George Johnstone left the field with an injury.

25/02/1961 Scottish Cup 3rd Round
Raith Rovers 1 Celtic 4
Attendance: 19,633

A tricky trip to play Buckie Thistle had been won with two Willie Wallace goals and that set up a visit from Celtic.

A Stevie Chalmers goal in seven minutes was equalised by Willie Wallace for Rovers but a minute later an Andy Leigh own goal put the Hoops back in front. Further goals

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from Fernie and Hughes secured the win. Wallace was sold to Hearts after 34 goals in 73 games later in the year. His next move was to Celtic in 1966.

13/04/1963 Scottish Cup Semi Final
Raith Rovers 2 Celtic 5
(Ibrox) Attendance: 35,681

With Raith Rovers in a transitional period, it was seen as a huge surprise to even the most ardent supporters that they reached the Scottish Cup semi-final. The Rovers had beaten Aberdeen in the quarterfinal - an Aberdeen side that earlier in the year had scored ten goals against the Rovers in a league match, with a final score of 10 - 0. However, the semi-final was a step too far, although at seven minutes into the second half the score sat at 1-1. Two Celtic penalties stretched their lead. The Rovers' goals came from Tommy McDonald and Bobby Gilfillan.

06/03/1971 Scottish Cup Quarter Final
Celtic 7 Raith Rovers 1
Attendance: 32,000

In the 3rd round, Rovers were drawn away to Willie Ormond's St Johnstone side. Saints were third in Division One (above Rangers) while the Rovers were a Second Division team. After 51 minutes, Saints were leading 2-0. George Innes and Brian Cooper equalised for the Rovers. Three days later, Raith won the replay 4-3 in front of 8438 fans, with

Colin Sinclair scoring a hat trick. A draw at home to Clyde brought a replay at Shawfield, which was won 2-0.

At Celtic Park, in the quarter final, Rovers were totally outclassed - 4-0 down at half time, Celtic scored seven in total including a Bobby Lennox hat-trick with Rovers consolation coming from Roddy Georgeson.

29/01/1980 Scottish Cup 3rd Round
Celtic 2 Raith Rovers 1
Attendance: 18,000

An away tie against the European Cup quarter finalists had most fans fearing a defeat along the lines of the game nine years earlier. However, a superb performance by Rovers' keeper, Murray McDermott, kept the score close. Ian Ballantyne scored the Rovers goal. Sadly, most fans remember Ronnie Duncan's fluffed chance to win a replay late in the game.

17/02/1996 Scottish Cup 4th Round
Celtic 2 Raith Rovers 0
Attendance: 33,415

In the 1995-96 season Rovers met Celtic on six occasions. Earlier in the season, Rovers had gone to Celtic Park and earned a 0-0 draw in the league and then taken Celtic to extra-time in the League Cup. There was to be no such repeat in the Scottish Cup when Rovers were beaten 2-0 by goals scored by Andreas Thom and John Collins.