

Hibs star Joe McBride dies

Former Hibs and Celtic star Joe McBride died last night aged 74 at Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

Joe was taken to hospital last Saturday, after suffering a stroke, but hopes that he would make a full recovery, were quashed last night when the sad news broke that he had lost his battle.

The 74-year-old played for Kilmarnock, Wolves, Motherwell, Celtic, Hibs, Dunfermline and Clyde in a career lasting 15 years between 1957 and 1972. During that time he was a prolific goal scorer, netting 226 goals in 382 league games.

He was part of the Lisbon Lions squad but a serious injury stopped him appearing the European Cup Final victory over Inter Milan, although he did receive a medal.

Joe was born just yards from Ibrox Stadium, and signed for Kilmarnock when he was 15. Then his performances came to the attention of top English club Wolves who paid £12, 500, a considerable fee in those days, for his services.

He did not settle in the Midlands however and returned to his homeland to sign for Motherwell where was the club's top scorer in three successive seasons.

Joe was then signed by Jock Stein for £22,000 in 1965. He became a regular scorer for the Parkhead side, and the following season, he topped the scoring charts alongside a certain Alex Ferguson who was playing with Dunfermline at the time.

Injury dogged his time with Celtic and in 1968, he signed for Hibs, replacing Colin Stein who had signed for Rangers for a record breaking £100,000. Joe immediately became a hero amongst the Easter Road faithful, scoring on his debut,

against Rangers, a hat-trick in his second match, against Lokomotive Leipzig, and four goals in his third match, against Morton.

Later that season, he scored two against Celtic in a match which is still talked about in Leith. One of the goals that day is often quoted amongst the finest ever scored at Easter Road.

Joe was Hibs' top goal-scorer in both the 1968–69 and 1969–70 seasons, and scored a second European hat-trick against Malmö FF in the Inter City Fairs Cup. He left Hibs in 1971, after scoring 58 goals in 91 games, and then had short spells with Dunfermline and Clyde.

Amazingly, he only won two caps for Scotland, both in 1967 British Home Championship matches against Wales and Ireland, and also scored eight goals in just four appearances for the Scottish League XI.

After his retirement, Joe, like many of his teammates went into the licensing trade, running 'The Wee Mill' near Shawfield Stadium, and also Sidelines on London Road along with another ex-Celtic and Hibs star, Bertie Auld.

Joe's son, also called Joe, joined Hibs from Everton and also became a favourite with the supporters for his style of play and his ability to score from free kicks, memorably scoring two late goals to earn a valuable point against Hearts at Tynecastle.

Both father and son demonstrated their love for the club in the Hibs end at Hampden earlier this year, hoping to see the club finally win the Scottish Cup. En route to Hampden, they were greeted warmly by the supporters who remembered the contribution both had made.

Since the news of his death, many fans forums have been inundated with messages of sympathy for his family,

highlighting the respect in which he was held by supporters of all clubs.

On Hibeas Bounce, Haarlem Shuffler posted: "One of the most memorable early matches I saw hanging onto a floodlight pylon behind the goals as Joe hammered two fantastic goals past Celtic in a game we were forecast to lose easily. What a player. Rest well man, cheered up my childhood."

Joe the Hibby posted: "Deepest sympathy to Joe's family and friends, a well thought of member of the Hibernian family, both as a player and a person."

A spokesman for Hibs said today: "Our sincere thoughts are with his family at this difficult time, he left a lasting impression on our club and he will always be remembered with great affection."