

The Game on New Year's Day: Hearts 0 Hibs 7



With the fortieth anniversary approaching of arguably the finest performance from a Hibs team in the club's history, Edinburgh headmaster turned author, Ted Brack, has launched his latest book, 'The game on new year's day: Hearts 0 Hibs 7' to commemorate that remarkable 1973 match.

I was one of the 35,989 spectators, and I recall the players and manager who gained legendary status that afternoon at the home of city rivals Hearts.

The previous season had ended with a 6-1 defeat to Jock Stein's Celtic in the Scottish Cup Final at Hampden Park, but despite the result, all Hibs fans could see that something special was happening at Easter Road. Manager Eddie Turnbull predicted that Hibs would soon be back at the National Stadium, and he was proved right at the start of the following season.

The Drybrough Cup featured the highest scoring teams in the first and second divisions at the time, and Hibs slaughtered Rangers 3-0 at Easter Road in the semi-final, in a game best remembered for the off field crowd trouble in the old cow shed. The final, three days later was also held up when Celtic fans outraged at being three-nil down invaded the pitch. The break spoiled Hibs concentration, and Celtic eventually clawed their way back into the game, forcing extra time, however goals from Jimmy O'Rourke and Arthur Duncan eventually saw the silverware head east along the M8.

A few months later, goals from Pat Stanton and Jimmy O'Rourke were enough to defeat Celtic as Hibs won the League Cup, and an eight goal thrashing of Ayr United together with a three-

two win over Aberdeen in the league saw Hibs sitting two points behind Celtic as they travelled to Gorgie for the New Year's Day game.

The Old Firm derby had been postponed as a number of Celtic players had the flu, and Turnbull knew that his team could go top with a six goal victory.

In those days, games were not all-ticket, and there was no compulsory segregation. Fans turned up at any turnstile and paid their money, before standing wherever they fancied on the terracing. Often, fans congregated behind whichever goal their team was attacking and would change ends at half time.

At Tynecastle however, the younger and more vocal supporters of both sides would face each other on the old covered terracing opposite the tunnel, hurling abuse and occasionally the odd bottle or can.

Hearts created some early chances and future Hibs coach Donald Park missed a decent opportunity for the home side before Hibs took the lead. Erich Schaedler's long throw was flicked on by Alan Gordon and Jimmy O'Rourke hammered a beautifully-struck left foot shot into the roof of the net.

A few minutes later, Alex Edwards sliced open the Hearts defence and Alan Gordon chested his pass down before tucking his shot into the net. Arthur Duncan exploited a defensive mistake to make it three 12 minutes later, then 10 minutes before the half-time break, and Alex Cropley volley made it four.

Hibs continued to attack, and after a well-worked short corner, Duncan's glancing header slipped into the net to make it five just before half time.

After 56 minutes Hibs scored a sixth when Pat Stanton cut through the Hearts defence and slipped the ball past Kenny Garland, only to see his lifelong pal O'Rourke nudge the ball

over the line. Since then Pat has regularly joked about Jimmy stealing his goal but he wasn't complaining that day.

The scoring was completed when Alan Gordon nodded in an Arthur Duncan cross to make history and send Hibs top of the league.

The Hibs team that day was: Jim Herriot, John Brownlie, Erich Schaedler, Pat Stanton, Jim Black, John Blackley, Alex Edwards, Jimmy O'Rourke, Alan Gordon, Alex Cropley, Arthur Duncan.



Jim Herriot had been one of Eddie Turnbull's first signings. He was a Scotland international, and had played the majority of his career in England where his performances for Birmingham City had so impressed author James Alfred Wight that he stole Jim's identity as a pen name for his book 'All Creatures Great and Small.'

The full backs were John Brownlie and Erich Schaedler. John was an unbelievable talent who had been capped by Scotland whilst still a teenager, which in those days was a remarkable achievement. 'Shades' had been bought from Stirling Albion by Willie Macfarlane, and was a tough tackler who belied his size. The son of a German POW, he also won international honours and was part of the Scotland World Cup Squad in Munich the following year.

In defence were Jim 'Cilla' Black, an under-rated tough centre half and the elegant 'Sloop' John Blackley who also travelled to Munich for the 1974 World Cup and played in the opening game.

In midfield were the incomparable Pat Stanton, who was described by Scotland boss Tommy Docherty as being better than Bobby Moore, England's world cup captain. Stanton was class personified and how Hibs, who were never shy in selling their best players, were able to hold onto him for so long remains a

mystery. Everyone who saw Pat in action would agree that he could have graced any team in the UK, and his total of only sixteen Scotland caps is nothing short of a national disgrace.

Alongside Pat was Alex 'Micky' Edwards who is widely regarded as the best player never to win a cap. Had he been playing today, he would have been a first choice for his country, but at that time, the selectors preferred Old Firm players, no doubt to increase the crowd. To be fair though, Micky was in competition with Celtic's Jimmy Johnstone and Rangers' Willie Henderson at the time, and he did have a reputation for having a short temper, but very few before or since could pass the ball like him.

If Hibs were able to keep Pat Stanton, they could not do the same with Alex 'Sodger' Cropley who graced Highbury and Villa Park in England's top division. Born in Aldershot of Scottish parents, Cropley was only the second player to be capped having been born outside the country, and his ability was such that he kept Kenny Dalglish out of the team. His skill on the ball was only rivalled by his bravery, and he suffered a number of serious injuries during his illustrious career.

On the left wing was Arthur 'Nijinsky' Duncan, whose nickname came from the horse rather than the ballet dancer, and whose speed caused problems for defenders everywhere.

Up front was ex Hearts forward Alan Gordon whose ability in the air was second to none. Once again, his lack of international caps is incomprehensible, for someone in his form. Strangely, although Scotland ignored Gordon, he was selected for an International XI select to play against Hamburg in Will Schultz's testimonial, rubbing shoulders with Eusebio, Denis Law and Bobby Charlton.

Partnering Alan Gordon up front was Jimmy O'Rourke who had made his Hibs debut as a 16 year old. Another vastly underrated player, by those outside Leith, Jimmy was and remains a

fans' favourite and is still a welcome face on match days.

The manager, Eddie Turnbull, was considered by many to be a better coach than Jock Stein. He had been a member of the famous five forward-line who won three league titles and was the first British player to score a goal in European football. He won the Scottish Cup with Aberdeen before returning to Easter Road and will always be fondly remembered by the Hibs faithful.

The team were and remain known as 'Turnbull's Tornadoes' after the song written by Chairman Tom Hart's wife.

The following Saturday, nearly 18,000 turned up to see Hibs retain top spot with a late victory over East Fife, but during that game, John Brownlie suffered a broken leg and Alex Edwards, who had been continuously fouled eventually lost his patience and threw the ball away, earning a booking and a 56-day suspension which ended Hibs title challenge.

You can watch the goals and get an idea of the atmosphere in this clip:-

Last word about the game goes to Harry Gilzean, the Evening News cartoonist whose 'Fitba Daft' strip featured a Hibs fan and Hearts fan who attended every Edinburgh game and discussed what had happened.

In his cartoon following the seven nil game, the Hearts fan is sitting depressed with a can of beer whilst his wife attempts to cheer him up. He responds by telling her that she doesn't understand as the Hibs fans will still be talking about that game for the next thirty years. It seems that even Harry underestimated what that day meant to the supporters.

Ted Brack's book is available in the club store alongside his others, 'There is a bonny fitba team,' 'The Life and Times of Last Minute Reilly' and 'There's only one Sauzee – When Le God

graced Easter Road.'