

Midlothian over 50s Walking Football team play first challenge match in Prestwick



The Midlothian over 50s Walking Football team yesterday took part in their first challenge match since the club formed last December.

The initiative was launched by Midlothian Council in a bid to get elderly or injured players back on the pitch, and the slower version of the 'beautiful game' has the same rules as normal football apart from the fact that players are forbidden to run.

A number of former Hibs' players attended the launch, including Keith Wright, Eric Stevenson and Jackie MacNamara who revealed that he and his team-mates used to play the game under Eddie Turnbull as part of the training regime.

The session is perfect for people who used to play football but now find the pace a bit too much. It's also a great introduction to football if you have never played before.

It takes a bit of getting used to, as instinctively the urge to run tends to take over, but although it might sound easy, the game requires particular skills, such as precision passing and tight ball control.



Normally around twenty regulars meet up every week at Loanhead and Penicuik to play the game, however due to other commitments a diminished squad of twelve made the 160 mile round trip to Prestwick following an invitation from the Caledonian Club who are based next to the airport.

Transport was arranged by Viv Wallace, the Midlothian Council Aging Well Coordinator who was involved in setting up the initiative, and the players lined up wearing a lilac and black strip, kindly donated by the Hibernian Community Foundation, whilst Caledonian played in their all white kit.

Four twenty minute games were played on Caledonian's outdoor AstroTurf pitch with teams consisting of six outfield players and a goalkeeper.

Caledonian started strongly in the first game, taking a 3-0 lead but two goals from Midlothian striker Andrew Wayth made it a nervous last few minutes for the Ayrshire team before they sealed the victory with the last kick to win 4-2.

Midlothian took the lead in the second game, again thanks to an Andrew Wayth strike before Caledonian grabbed two quick goals to take a narrow lead. Viv Wallace equalised for Midlothian with an instinctive strike from close range, but another two goals gave Caledonian a comfortable lead at the halfway stage.

Andrew Wayth then scored his fourth of the day to make the score 4-3, but with Midlothian pressing for an equaliser, Caledonian scored on the break to make it 5-3.

Kenny McDonald then pulled one back to make it 5-4 but despite a strong finish from Midlothian, Caledonian held on for the narrow win.

The third game was level, with both defences on top. Peter Collins in particular kept the Caledonian attack at bay until just before the end when a break-away goal gave Caledonian the lead, but Midlothian hit back immediately and equalised with a fine long range effort from 'Pud' Ramage.

Caledonian proved too strong in the final game, taking a 3-0 lead before the prolific Andrew Wayth scored his fifth to make it 3-1. A late brace from Caledonian made it 5-1.

Man of the match was Midlothian goalkeeper Glen Milne who made a string of fantastic saves, narrowly beating Andrew Wayth into second place.

The game was played in good spirit, with only one free-kick being awarded in the four games following an 'over enthusiastic' challenge by Viv Wallace.

The players who took part were Bob Blaikie, Peter Collins, Peter Frame, Eddie Henderson, John Hislop, Kenny McDonald, Stevie Macdonald, Glen Milne, Eric Platten, Pud Ramage, Viv Wallace and Andrew Wayth.

Afterwards Viv told the Edinburgh Reporter: "We decided that we needed to start something up primarily for men. The projects at the moment involves pilates, yoga and keep fit but that mainly attracts women so the idea came along that we wanted to try football and get the guys involved. We started in December with one session and increased it early on this year to two.

"The project runs for the over 50s and there is no upper age limit. Today we have players from early fifties to early eighties. In fact we have two chaps who are 81.

"It was a good game but they are obviously a more experienced side and it was very hot, but it was good fun.

"The sessions are held between 2pm and 4pm on a Wednesday at the Bayne Memorial Hall in Loanhead or Fridays at Ladywood Leisure Centre 10am till noon.

Viv has a message for anyone interested in taking part: "Definitely come along and have a go. It's a lot harder than you think, so come and watch if you are not too sure then join in."

To Listen to Viv click here.

[listen to 'Viv Wallace' on Audioboo](#)



Peter Collins 81 and Bob Blaikie 82 who both played two full games each in the boiling conditions echoed Viv's call for more people to come along to the sessions.

Peter said: "I think it's a wonderful thing for older men to get out there. Everybody likes to play football and once you get used to slowing up a wee bit it's really terrific

"Caledonian were a superior team to us. They were used to the pitch better than us and they moved the ball better than us. Of the four results, they won three of them and we drew one so there is plenty room for improvement from us."

Bob joked: "My opinion is that there were too many 'trotters' in their team and we couldn't keep up because we were a lot older than them but I think it's a great social event."

To listen to Bob and Peter click here.

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