

Hibernian FC – 140 years old today



Today marks a significant date in the history of Hibs, and the Edinburgh Reporter looks back at the highs and lows of the club which led the way in providing several innovative changes to 'the beautiful game.'

Hibernian Football Club was launched on Friday, the 6th August 1875 as part of the celebration at the St Mary's Street Halls to mark the centenary of the birth of Daniel O'Connell, the champion of the Catholic Emancipation. Father Edward Hannan was elected as the Club's Manager and Life President and Michael Whelahan appointed Captain (a position to be held many years later by his great great great grand-nephew, Pat Stanton). It was Whelahan who chose the name Hibernian from the Latin word for Ireland.

The team was quickly taken under the wing of the Catholic Young Men's Society, or CYMS, which was based at the local St Patrick's Church in the Cowgate, who offered the Irishmen training and changing facilities. All the players were Catholic Irishmen or the descendants of Irishmen who had come to Edinburgh during the great Irish Potato Famines of the nineteenth century,



In 1987, 'Hibs' became the first club from the east of Scotland to win the Scottish Cup, beating Dumbarton 2-1 in the final and as holders were invited to play top English side Preston North End in a game described as the 'Association Football Championship of the World.' In a hard-fought game, Hibernian emerged as 2-1 winners in front of a record crowd at the old Easter Road.

After going out of existence for a short period, Hibs returned as a founder member of the Scottish Second Division in 1893 and were promoted to the top flight two years later.

In 1902 Hibs won the Scottish Cup for the second (and last) time, beating Celtic 1-0, then the following year they won the Scottish League title under the leadership of legendary manager Dan McMichael.

Tragedy struck near the end of that decade when right back James Main was injured on Christmas Day 1909 during a match against Partick Thistle and four days later died from his injuries. (A plaque in his memory is located in the Famous Five Stand)

Three more Scottish Cup final defeats were followed by relegation in 1930/31 and immediate promotion back to the top flight.

During WWII, Hibs won the 1941 Summer Cup winning 3-2 against Rangers at Hampden Park with a team containing Matt Busby. Three years later Hibs won the Southern League Cup, beating Rangers by 6 corners to 5 after a goalless draw.

After WWII, Hibernian won the League Championship three times in seasons 1947/48 1950/51 and 1951.

During this period also lost another Scottish Cup Final to Aberdeen despite taking an early lead and a Scottish League Cup Final to Motherwell.

In 1951, Hibs played in the first game in Scotland to be staged under floodlights, winning 5-3 against Stenhousemuir in a friendly. They also competed in the first competitive floodlight game when they drew 1-1 with Raith Rovers in a Scottish Cup tie.



The forward line of that team was known as 'The Famous Five'

and included Gordon Smith, Bobby Johnstone, Lawrie Reilly, Eddie Turnbull and Willie Ormond.

In 1955, Hibernian were invited to take part in the inaugural European Champions Cup, the first British club to compete. After beating German champions Rot Weiss Essen 4-0 away from home in the first round, Hibs progressed to the semi final where they were defeated by French side Reims.

In 1958, Hibs again lost in the final of the Scottish Cup, this time to Clyde 1-0 however the emergence of a teenage superstar Joe Baker helped ease the pain. Joe would go on to play 194 times over two spells, scoring an incredible 158 goals including nine in a famous 15-1 victory over Peebles Rovers in the Scottish Cup.



More European adventures followed, including a famous 7-6 aggregate win over Barcelona then a 5-5 draw after a two legged Inter Cities Fairs Cup semi-final against Roma. Had the away goals rule been applicable, Hibs would have progressed to the final however a play off match was arranged in Italy and the Scots side were defeated.

Another famous name visited Easter Road in 1964 in a friendly match arranged by new manager Jock Stein, and Hibs defeated the great Real Madrid side 2-0 with the first goal being scored by teenager Peter Cormack. That year the team also won the summer Cup, beating Aberdeen over two legs.

In 1967 Hibs beat a Naples side which included Italian keeper Dino Zoff in goal, 5-0 at Easter Road, winning the tie 6-4 on aggregate.

During the 1960s, Hibs played some entertaining football but sold many of their star players for high fees, including Joe Baker, Neil Martin, Dave Gibson, Colin Stein, Peter Marinello and Peter Cormack.

In 1971, Eddie Turnbull returned to Easter Road as manager and created a team which is still revered to this day, known as the Turnbull's Tornados.



The following year, after losing the Scottish Cup Final to Celtic, Hibs returned to Hampden to defeat the Hoops 5-3 in the Drybrough Cup Final, then 2-1 in the Scottish League Cup Final thanks to goals from Pat Stanton and Jimmy O'Rourke. Three weeks later, Hibs travelled across the city for the New Year's derby and won 0-7 in a game known to all fans as 'the Greatest game in History.'

The Drybrough Cup was retained the following season but the team was broken up too early when Joe Harper was bought from Everton for a record Scottish transfer fee of £120,000. Harper helped the club to another League Cup Final and actually scored a hat trick but ended up with a runners -up medal.

Once again, many of the star players were transferred for big fees, including Alex Cropley, John Brownlie and John Blackley as Hibs' fortunes deteriorated.

In 1977 Hibs became the first club in Scotland to feature the name of a sponsor (Bukta) on their jerseys and a few years later under the leadership of Chairman Tom Hart, Hibs became the first club in the country to install undersoil heating.

Turnbull lead Hibs to another Scottish Cup Final in 1979 against Rangers however after two goalless draws, the Ibrox men eventually won the trophy 3-2 in the second replay.

The following season saw Hibs relegated despite the signing of former 'European Footballer of the Year' George Best but once again, their stay in the lower division was for one year only and they returned as champions of the First Division.

The 1980s saw another League Cup Final defeat, this time to

Aberdeen and Chairman Kenny Waugh installed one of Scotland's first electronic scoreboards.

In 1990, Hearts' Chairman Wallace Mercer launched a takeover bid for the club however the supporters rallied under the banner of 'Hands off Hibs' and with the help of local businessman Sir Tom Farmer Hibernian were saved. Coincidentally relatives of Sir Tom helped save the club 100 years before.

The following year, the 'Team that wouldn't Die' won the Skol Scottish League Cup against all odds, beating Dunfermline 2-0 in the final at Hampden.

With Sir Tom's backing, Easter Road was upgraded during the 1990s with the building of new stands at the north and south ends. The decade ended however with another relegation during the 1997/98 season, but new manager Alex McLeish was given funds to spend and amongst the arrivals was French international Franck Sauzee and Trinidad and Tobago star Russell Latapy.

Hibs easily won promotion and McLeish's team reached the 2001 Scottish Cup Final where they were defeated by a strong Celtic side.

After a spell in mid table, Hibs appointed Tony Mowbray as manager and he built a young team which included home grown talent such as Derek Riordan, Scott Brown, Garry O'Conner, Steven Whittaker, Kevin Thompson and Steven Fletcher. Mowbray subsequently moved to West Bromwich Albion but his successor John Collins led the team to a CIS League Cup win, beating Kilmarnock 5-1 in the final.

Since then, the team have been in decline although they did reach and lose two Scottish Cup Finals under Pat Fenlon before suffering relegation under Terry Butcher.

Last season, under new manager Alan Stubbs, the team finished

second in the Championship but failed to gain promotion after losing to Rangers in the play offs.

Season 2015/16 starts on Saturday when Hibs take on Dumbarton.

Records

Attendance

- Highest single game attendance: 65,860 vs Hearts, 2 January 1950
- Highest average home attendance: 30,700 in the 1951–52 season
- Highest attendance for any match involving Hibs: 143,570 vs Rangers at Hampden Park, 27 March 1948

Single game

- Biggest victory: 22–1 vs Black Watch Highlanders, 3 September 1881
- Biggest competitive victory: 15–1 vs Peebles Rovers, 11 February 1961
- Biggest league victory: 11–1 vs Airdrie, 24 October 1959 and vs Hamilton, 6 November 1965
- Biggest defeat: 0–10 vs Rangers, 24 December 1898

Caps and appearances

- Most capped player: Lawrie Reilly, 38 for Scotland
- Most league appearances: Arthur Duncan, 446

Goals

- Most competitive goals: Reilly, 234
- Most league goals: Reilly, 187
- Most competitive goals in a season: Joe Baker, 46 in 1959–60
- Most league goals in a season: Baker, 42 in 1959–60

Transfers

- Record fee paid: £700,000 for Ulises de la Cruz to LDU Quito in 2001
- Record fee received: £4,400,000 for Scott Brown from Celtic in 2007