

# Midlothian Walking Football 'Player of the Year' announced



Santa arrived early this year when he unexpectedly popped into the Bayne Memorial Hall in Loanhead yesterday to present the Midlothian Walking Football 'Player of the Year' award to stalwart Jim Shepherd before joining in a few games.

Jim is a regular at the weekly sessions in Loanhead every Wednesday between 2-4pm and Penicuik every Friday between 9-30 and 11.30am and he follows in the footsteps of former winners Bob 'Boabaldo' Blakie and Peter Collins.

Walking football, a slower version of the beautiful game has taken off throughout the country and is aimed at the over 50s.

The Midlothian team have taken part in a number of tournaments and were recently voted the Midlothian senior sporting team of the year for 2015.

In June they reached the semi-final of the 'Age Scotland' tournament at Ainslie Park, losing to the eventual winners Hibernian Ffit on penalties after going through the group stages undefeated and without conceding a goal.

Because they were the highest ranking over 50s team in the tournament, Midlothian were invited to represent Scotland in the Browns International Walking Football Tournament in Portugal where they again qualified unbeaten from the group stages before losing in the semi-final on penalties. Jim was voted the Midlothian 'Player of the Tournament' for his performances in the Algarve.



The team also reached the semi-final of the Blue Flame tournament in Newcastle in October and last week they won the inaugural Gala Fairydean Rovers Walking Football Festival at the Queen's Centre in Galashiels.

The Edinburgh Reporter sends our congratulations to Jim.

Football fans from the capital may have noticed that Santa bears a 'striking' resemblance to a certain Scotland international footballer and Hibs' legend. Any suggestions  
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