

Rangers 3-2 Hibernian – Scottish Cup Final 1979



On Saturday, Hibs have another chance to end their Scottish Cup hoodoo when they face Rangers at Hampden Park.

This week the Edinburgh Reporter looks back at several previous finals involving Hibernian, starting with the only other time these clubs have met at this stage of the competition.

Hibs reached the 1979 Scottish Cup final after disposing of Dunfermline Athletic and Meadowbank Thistle before facing city rivals Hearts at Easter Road in the quarter finals. Despite the fact that both teams were near the bottom of the league, the fixture was eagerly anticipated by both sets of fans.

Big George Stewart gave Hibs the lead with a towering header before a thunderbolt from Gordon Rae doubled their advantage. Hearts pulled a goal back in the second half but Hibs held on for the victory.

The semi-final against Alex Ferguson's Aberdeen was equally tight and Hibs won 2-1 on a cold and wet Wednesday night in front of a poor attendance of 9,873 at the national stadium. Stevie Archibald gave the Dons an early lead but goals from Rae and Ally McLeod secured the win.

The final was held on Saturday 12th May in front of 50,610 supporters and Rangers were considered to be favourites with players such as Sandy Jardine, Derek Johnstone, Davie Cooper, Tommy McLean and Derek Parlane in their side.

The Hibs team that day was McArthur, Brazil, Stewart,

McNamara, Duncan, Hutchison, Bremner, Callachan, Higgins, McLeod, Campbell. Only one substitute was allowed and manager Eddie Turnbull selected Rae who had scored in both the semi and quarters finals. The Rangers substitute that day was Alex Miller who would later manage Hibs for 10 years.

The final was a hard fought affair which ended goalless however the main talking point amongst the fans leaving the stadium was a late Hibs penalty appeal which referee Brian McGinlay rejected. To this day, every Hibs' fans who was present is adamant that Colin Campbell was illegally sent crashing to the ground by Rangers' keeper Peter McCloy inside the area but it was not to be, and not for the first or last time was there a feeling of injustice amongst those heading back along the M8. After the game Hibs' boss Eddie Turnbull claimed that McCloy had 'crucified' Campbell and the player himself remains certain that it should have been a penalty.

In those days the final was not decided on a penalty shoot out and the replay was held the following Wednesday night. This time only 33,504 turned up to watch and once again neither team was able to make the break through. Hibs made one change to the starting XI with Rae replacing Hutchison.

The second replay took place on Monday 28th May in front of 30,602 spectators. Turnbull kept the same team and Hibs took the lead in the 16th minute through Tony Higgins. From then on Hibs dominated the game playing with confidence and assurance but spurned chances to add to their lead.

With Hibs totally in command, Rangers boss John Greig made a tactical change moving Ally Dawson to right back to mark Higgins with Jardine joining Colin Jackson in the centre of the defence allowing Johnstone to move up front.

Three minutes before half time McLean's shot skidded off the soaking wet Hampden turf and although Jim McArthur managed to save the effort, the ball fell to Johnstone who equalised from

close range.

In the second half, Rangers came back into the game and took the lead in the 61st minute when Jardine found Bobby Russell on the right wing. The midfielder sent the ball into the penalty area and once again Johnstone was on hand to hook the ball into the net.

Hibs were not finished however and 12 minutes from time substitute Bobby Hutchison was upended by a Jackson 'tackle' and on this occasion, the referee was left with no option other than to point to the spot, despite massive protests from the Rangers' players.

The reliable McLeod calmly slotted home the resultant penalty kick and the game went to extra time.

In the 104th minute, the referee awarded a 'soft' penalty to Rangers when Derek Parlane went down following a challenge by Arthur Duncan. This time however justice was done when substitute Miller's spot kick was saved by McArthur.

Gordon Smith had a goal correctly disallowed moments later and it looked as though the fans would have to return for yet another replay however a great run by Cooper down the left wing ended with a dangerous ball across the face of goal. The cross beat McArthur and with Smith and Johnstone ready to pounce, Duncan raced in and managed to get his head to the ball before the Rangers' duo. Unfortunately his header ended up in the net and Rangers won the Scottish Cup by a 3-2 margin.

It was probably just as well that the game did not go to a third replay as there would have been very few supporters buses with windows intact to transport the Hibs' fans back through as barely one bus returned to the capital without at least one broken window.

Tomorrow we look back to when Hibs became the first club from

the east of Scotland to win the trophy.