

# **Congratulations to Midlothian: Scottish Walking Football Festival 2017 champions**


Huge congratulations to Midlothian who yesterday won the Scottish Walking Football Festival, the equivalent of the sport's Scottish Cup, at Glasgow Green Sports Centre.



Two years ago, Midlothian were knocked out on penalties in the semi-final then last year they were unlucky to lose to Montrose in the final, but yesterday they went one better and deservedly lifted the trophy after playing some outstanding walking football.

Health and Sport Minister Aileen Campbell opened the event which was covered live by Radio Scotland's Sportsound programme and a number of former players including Barry and Derek Ferguson, Joe Miller, Alex Rae and Frank McAvennie joined journalists Chick Young, Graham Spiers and Kenny Macintyre in a celebrity team.

A record 32 teams from throughout Scotland took part in the event which was jointly organised by the charity Paths for All and Glasgow Sport.

 After qualifying from a strong group section containing Loretto, Hearts 06 and Glasgow Sport East, Midlothian comfortably defeated a strong Dunfermline Athletic side to reach the semi-final.

A comprehensive victory over Hearts 98 then set up a final against Gretna. The pair previously faced each other in the

final of the Gala Fairydean Rovers tournament at Netherdale last month where the South of Scotland team 'ran out' winners, so revenge was sweet for Midlothian who play twice weekly in Loanhead and Penicuik.

With Scottish football legend Archie McPherson commentating from the sidelines, Midlothian produced an excellent performance to win 2-0 although, but for some heroics from the Gretna goalkeeper, the scoreline could easily have been much higher.

What made Midlothian's achievement even more impressive (and popular) was the fact that their goalkeeper throughout the tournament was 85-year-old Peter Collins.

Lifelong Hibs face Peter is a 'weel kent' face in the walking football community and plays an incredible SIX times each week.

☒ Wearing his treasured Hibs' goalkeeper's top, which was presented to him by the club, Peter and Archie reminisced about the golden age of Scottish football with Peter recalling having watched Hibs in the European Cup semi-final against Stade Reims in 1956.

One of Peter's sons, Douglas, also took part in the tournament and given there is an over 50s stipulation, this is thought to have been the first time a father and son have played together in a walking football tournament.

Equally impressive was the fact that Midlothian won the event without their former player of the year, 86-year-old Bob 'Boabaldo' Blakie who was otherwise engaged.

Midlothian will now represent Scotland in a Home International tournament later this year.

Midlothian team L to R back Row: Douglas Collins, Vivian Wallace, Archie McPherson, Peter Collins and Archie Mason.

Front Row: Malcolm Kay, Mike Addison, Colin Crawford and Kenny Davidson.