

John Hislop selects his best Hibs' team from last 50 years



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Edinburgh Reporter's sports correspondent John Hislop's first visit to Easter Road.

Here he looks back on some of the great players he has seen and selects his best eleven from that period.

"Alan Rough kept us in the top flight whilst Jim Leighton showed why he was the most capped and John 'Budgie' Burridge helped us to win the League cup, but in my opinion, Andy Goram was the best ever Hibernian goalkeeper. Some of his performances were outstanding and one in particular at Tynecastle had the Hearts' fans chanting his name.

"David Gray captained us to a Scottish Cup win as well as scoring the winning goal and Steven Whittaker helped us to a CIS Cup win but there is only one candidate for the right back spot and anyone who saw him play will agree. John Brownlie was capped at 19 when this was almost unheard of and if there was a better player anywhere in that position then I never saw him. He was deservedly inducted into the Hibernian Historical trust Hall of Fame in 2017.

"Lewis Stevenson has served the club with distinction for ten years and David Murphy was a key player in the 2007 CIS Cup win but Erich Schaedler gets my vote. Hard as nails, the son of a German POW flew into tackles against opponents twice his size. Sadly Erich is no longer with us but his memory marches on.

"We have had many decent central defenders over the years, Jim Black, Jackie MacNamara, Craig Paterson, Gordon Rae, Gordon

Hunter, Rob Jones, James McPake, Paul Hanlon and Darren McGregor spring to mind however I have chosen Sloop John Blackley, an elegant tough as teak defender who represented Scotland at the 1974 World Cup in Munich and the great Franck Sauzee. Franck spent most of his career in midfield but Alex McLeish moved him to the centre of the Hibs' defence where he was outstanding. 39 caps for France.

"In midfield, one name stands out. Born and brought up in Craigmillar, Pat Stanton stayed with Hibs when he could have moved to any of the top clubs in England. Scotland manager Tommy Docherty once described Pat as being better than England's World Cup winning captain Bobby Moore and he was correct. For Pat to only have 16 caps is a national disgrace.

"Other contenders include Peter Cormack, Peter Marinello, Eric Stevenson, George Best, Arthur Duncan, Des Bremner, Ralph Callaghan John Collins, Michael Weir, Scott Brown and Super John McGinn but I have gone for three fans' favourites.

"Eddie Turnbull signed Alex 'Mickey' Edwards for £12,000 from Dunfermline. Given his first team debut by Jock Stein as a 16-year-old, Alex is often described as Scotland's best uncapped players. Occasionally temperamental Mickey often fell foul of referees but we could put up with his many suspensions for the occasional flash of brilliance.

"Russell Latapy was known as the Little Magician in his native Tobago. He was recommended to Alex McLeish by his international team mate Tony Rougier and it took only a few minutes in a friendly match against Brechin City to convince 'Big Eck' that he had found a genius. His first touch was sublime and he always seemed to have acres of space.

"Another of the famous 'Turnbull's Tornadoes' takes the left sided role. Alex 'Sodjer' Cropley was an elegant footballer with a ferocious tackle. He left Hibs for Arsenal then moved to Aston Villa where he is still revered. His left foot volley

at Tynecastle would have been enough to secure his place in this team on its own.

“Selecting two forwards was also a difficult task considering the talented strikers to have worn the famous green and white jersey in the last 50 years.

“Colin Stein won a European trophy for Rangers, Joe McBride would have done likewise with Celtic but for an injury and of course Joe Baker returned from England to delight the Hibs fans.

“In addition, Keith Wright, Darren Jackson, Derek Riordan, Garry O’Conner, Steven Fletcher, Anthony Stokes, Leigh Griffiths and Jason Cummings all deserve a mention but I have chosen two players who formed a prolific partnership in the early 1970s.

“Jimmy O’Rourke made his debut as a 16-year-old against Utrecht whilst Alan Gordon was a bargain buy from Dundee United. Although neither were capped for Scotland, Alan was chosen to play for a ‘Rest of the World’ team in a testimonial match for German international Willi Schultz.

“The manager would be the late great Eddie Turnbull.

“So to sum up, my Hibernian team from the past 50 years is Goram, Brownlie, Schaedler, Stanton, Sauzee, Blackley, Edwards, Latapy, Cropley, O’Rourke, Gordon. Subs: Rough, Gray, Bremner, Collins, Baker.

“Feel free to argue!!!!”