

Fellow Scottish Cup winners pay tribute to Paul Hanlon



Two of Paul Hanlon's team mates in the historic Scottish Cup Final victory over Rangers in 2016 have paid tribute to his character and ability ahead of next weekend's testimonial match against Blackburn Rovers.

Hanlon has been a stalwart in the Hibs' defence in recent years and his form led to a call-up for the senior Scotland squad in November last year for a friendly against the Netherlands.

He had already been capped 23 times for the Under-21s.

The popular defender was voted as the club's Player of the Year in March 2014 but was ruled out for the remainder of the season. At the time of his injury, Hibs were seven points clear of danger however without him, Hibs went on a losing streak and were eventually relegated.

Since then, Hanlon has helped Hibs to a famous Scottish Cup victory and promotion as Champions back to the top flight.

His equalising goal at Tynecastle will never be forgotten by the Hibs' supporters.

Last season he played an important role in the club's qualification for Europe and his ten year's of first team action has seen him rewarded with a testimonial match against Tony Mowbray's side.

Typically, like his friend Lewis Stevenson, a significant proportion of the money received will go to local charities

Liam Henderson who now plays in Italy with Bari said: "Honestly what a player and a person Paul Hanlon is. I sat next to him in the dressing room in my time at Easter Road. He was one of the guys who took the time to take me aside and give me advice on the things that I could do to improve.

"One thing I remember is that before a game he would always tell me to go out and express myself. As a young player that was great to hear and tremendous advice.

"Paul deserves everything he gets He also has a better left foot than Jason Cummings!"

Lewis Stevenson said: "I have been lucky enough to have played with Paul over all the years he has graced Easter Road.

"I knew from the beginning that he was going to be a top player and in my opinion he has been the most important player in the club's recent history. He has amazing defensive capabilities.

"His reading of the game is matched by his excellent range of passing – not to mention the fact that Pau's chipped in with some very important goals. It's been a pleasure to play alongside Paul and he has made my job a whole lot easier.

"I'm also privileged to call Paul one of my true friends. It's been great to see him go from a fresh-faced teenager to a great husband to Danielle and an amazing dad to Ollie.

“He’s a life-long Hibby and for me he will go down as one of the greats. I’m sure the supporters will give him the testimonial he deserves.”