

Hibs' Inter Cities Fairs Cup campaign of 50 years ago



Hibs' European adventure finished with a defeat against Molde in Norway in August in the third qualifying round of the Europa League and now, The Edinburgh Reporter looks back at the club's European campaign from 50 years ago.

European qualification was a regular occurrence for Hibs in the 1960s when an absence of seeding meant that some of the best club sides in the world played under the Easter Road floodlights.

Hibs qualified for the 1968/69 Inter Cities Fairs Cup due to finishing third in the league behind Celtic and Rangers and six points clear of fourth placed Dunfermline.

The previous season, the club's name reverberated throughout Europe after overturning a 4-1 deficit against Italian giants Napoli with a sensational 5-0 victory in the home leg.

A narrow defeat to Leeds who won the tie with a controversial goal by Jack Charlton ended their involvement, but hopes were high amongst fans when the first round paired them with Olimpija Ljubljana.

17-year-old Peter Marinello made his European debut as the game started in a thunderstorm at the Bežigrad stadium and had a hand in all three goals.

Eric Stevenson opened the scoring in the on the half-hour mark then Colin Stein doubled their advantage three minutes later. An own goal from centre half Soskic secured Hibs biggest away victory in European competitions.

Several Olimpija players refused to play in the return leg due

to a fear of flying but the visitors opened the scoring in the fourth minute and spent the rest of the first half kicking and hacking the Hibs' forward line.

Hibs eventually equalised with a Joe David penalty in the 63rd minute and wrapped things up with another spot kick moments later after Jovanovic was ordered off.

Next up were Lokomotive Leipzig who were one of the top sides in the German Democratic Republic, regularly challenging for the East German title and sampling European glory of their own by winning the Intertoto Cup in 1966. In Henning Frenzel, they also possessed a dangerous striker nicknamed the 'East German Gerd Muller,' topping the domestic goalscoring charts in almost every season of his professional career

A memorable first half hat-trick from new signing Joe McBride secured a 3-1 victory at Easter Road although the scoreline should have been greater but for the ineptitude of the Swiss referee.

The return leg took four flights and a 120-mile coach trip but that did not stop Hibs taking an early lead from Grant and comfortably holding on to secure passage to the last 16 where they were drawn against Hamburg who had reached the Cup Winners Cup final the previous season.

A piper from the Royal Scots led the teams out at the Volkspark Stadium and it was the hosts who scored the only goal of the game in the fifth minute through Honig. The Germans dominated with Pat Stanton immense in defence alongside John Madsen and Hibs were unlucky not to equalise with late chances from Peter Cormack and McBride.

Another dire refereeing performance from Mr Johnson from Sweden resulted in Hibs exiting the tournament despite an impressive 2-1 victory on the night over Hamburg.

Firstly he allowed the German goalkeeper to wear a green

jersey then in the 13th minute, McBride's shot which clearly struck the roof of the net was disallowed after the ball was cleared than Stanton had a perfectly legal goal chalked off for offside.

The visitors adopted a 'stop at all costs' policy and three players were booked in the first half although many thought this a lenient punishment

A rare Davis penalty miss just before the break meant that both teams leave the field with the score level.

It was one-way traffic again in the second half and McBride opened the scoring from close range before World Cup finalist Uwe Seeler made it 1-1 following a mistake in the Hibs defence.

McBride grabbed his second in the last minute but the away goals rule meant that Hamburg were through to the quarter finals. Incredibly the only person inside Easter Road who didn't know this was Mr Johnson who prepared for extra time.

Hibs' legend Pat Stanton who turned 74 this month recalled that era in the club's history "People tend to forget about the team we had in the 1960s, but we had some great players such as Neil Martin, Peter Cormack, Peter Marinello and Eric Stevenson. There were many fantastic European nights including Naples and Leeds who were one of the best teams in the world at the time but we more than matched them."