

# Hibernian's Drybrough Cup triumphs

In the history of Hibernian Football Club, the two Drybrough Cup triumphs are sometimes under appreciated but it should be pointed out that only the best teams in the country qualified and both finals were attended by over 49,000 fans.

The early 1970s saw the authorities refuse to allow companies to lend their name to existing tournaments.

As a result those companies prepared to put some money into the game had to set up their own tournaments, of which the Drybrough Cup was one – the first sponsored competition exclusive to Scottish clubs.

The competition was established in 1971, a year after the similar Watney Cup had been introduced in England and was open to the clubs which scored the most League goals in the preceding season – the top four from the then two existing divisions – with the draw seeded so that top division clubs couldn't clash in the opening round. In England the Watney Cup was played for by the highest scorers EXCLUDING teams who qualified for Europe or won promotion.

The competition provided an opportunity for the Scottish FA to experiment with new rules and ideas for football and in 1972

and 1973 an experimental version of the offside rule was operated.

The new rule saw the penalty area line extended to join up with the touchlines, creating a solid line across the pitch 18 yards from each goal. The offside law then only applied when a player was beyond the new penalty area line.

Hibs started with a comfortable 4-0 victory over Montrose thanks to goals from Johnny Hamilton, Pat Stanton, Alan Gordon and Arthur Duncan.

The semi-final at Easter Road against Rangers who fielded nine members of the team that won the European cup Winners Cup a few months previously was attended by 27,111.

Hibernian demolished Rangers and the 3-0 scoreline flattered the visitors although the game is probably best remembered for disgraceful scenes off the pitch.

The match was held up on several occasions as the furious Rangers fans invaded the pitch and hurled bottles into the home supporters massed in the old 'Cowshed'.

The behaviour of the visiting 'fans' that night resulted in the closure of the shed and the subsequent installation of bench seats.

The Final was a thrilling affair and two goals from Alan Gordon gave Hibernian a comfortable half-time lead. An own goal by Billy McNeil appeared to secure victory but this time the Celtic 'fans' invaded the pitch upsetting the Hibernian players' rhythm.

Incredibly Celtic levelled the score but extra time goals from Jimmy O'Rourke, a 40-yard wonder strike and a superb solo effort from Arthur Duncan meant the trophy would be heading to Leith.

Three days later, the cup was presented to the Hibernian fans

before a friendly with West Bromwich Albion and the players received a tremendous reception from the large crowd.

The following season, holders Hibernian progressed to the semi-final. thanks to a 2-1 victory over St Mirren thanks to goals from Iain Munro and Arthur Duncan. The score would have been much greater but for an excellent performance from Saints' new keeper Jim Herriot.

Rangers arrived at Easter Road having gone 27 games unbeaten but goals from Des Bremner, his first for the club and youngster Tony Higgins secured incredibly Hibernian's fourth successive semi-final triumph over the Ibrox side in front of a crowd of over 28,000.

Derek Parlane scored for the visitors. For the second successive season the Final was a Hibernian-Celtic affair. This time though it was a much poorer game as Hibernian retained the trophy in front of 49,204 thanks to the only goal of the game from Alan Gordon in extra time.

Hibernian manager Eddie Turnbull later recalled: "From the start we were brilliant. No-one could have lived with us that first half. I had left out Alex Edwards because I remembered how he had been so quiet in the Scottish Cup final but that left plenty room for John Brownlie to get forward and 'Sloop' was quite superb.

"Our defence was rock solid. Pat Stanton and Alex Cropley controlled the midfield and Alan Gordon, Jimmy O'Rourke and Arthur Duncan ran riot up front.

"To the total disbelief of the Celtic fans and probably our ow supporters too, we romped into a three goal lead with Alan Gordon scoring two and pressurising Billy McNeil into scoring an own goal.

"There was a pitch invasion by Celtic fans which upset our rhythm. Big Billy (McNeil) inspired their comeback. He scored

their first and Jimmy Johnstone bagged two excellent goals for a 3-3 scoreline at 90-minutes.

"I came onto the pitch and sat the players down. I told them to keep playing football, keep passing and keep the ball on the ground and they would get their reward. When Jimmy O'Rourke got our fourth I could sense the day was ours.

"Arthur Duncan's late solo effort made sure the cup came to us.

"Some people were quick to say that it was 'only' the Drbrough Cup but I knew we had started something that the fans would enjoy.

"The proof was the big crowd that came to applaud the cup winners when we played West Bromwich Albion in a friendly the following Tuesday.

"The following season we once again beat Rangers in the semi-final. That match went to extra time and so did the final at Hampden a few days later.

"Celtic dominated the first half with Dalglish hitting the bar but we came good in the second half after I sent on Alex Cropley for the young Iain Munro who was rather overawed by the occasion. "In extra time we were again the better side and in the last minute Cropley and Tony Higgins combined to set up Alan Gordon for the winner and we completed a superb hat-trick of victories over Celtic in Cup Finals."