

John McGinn emulates Lawrie Reilly with first half hat trick



Former Hibs' star 'Super' John McGinn yesterday became the first Scotland player to score a first half hat-trick since Lawrie Reilly against the USA 67 years ago as Steve Clarke's side demolished San Marino 6-0 at Hamden.

It was McGinn's first ever career hat-trick but he spent the second half concerned French referee Jerome Brisard would abandon the game due to the wet conditions.

There was some confusion as to whether he got a touch on Ryan Christie's shot to open the scoring but McGinn insisted that he did and he took home the match ball which he will treasure.

After the game man of the match McGinn said: "The ball was sticking a bit. I wouldn't say it was dangerous but it was

getting tough. The right-hand side was better than the left, but we decided at times to play on left, which was a bit stupid.

“I’ve never scored a hat-trick before because I used to be a left back so I never used to get forward but I’m beaming, delighted. I’ve been watching Lawrence Shankland in training and learning how to finish!

“The match ball is in my bag. I might never get another one so I’m definitely going to keep this one and treasure it.

“I got a nick on the first one. I saw Ryan putting the ball across and I got a wee touch on it. My conscience is clear because I’m saying it was going wide!”

“It’s four goals for me with Scotland after a slow start. I’m delighted and I hope it is the start of many to come.

“It’s something I have been working on at club level and hopefully I can use it to help Scotland as well

“As a country we are hurting after the recent results – the players and the supporters.

“The coaching staff are all desperate to make this country successful so we will do what we can to do that.

“When we have results like Russia, we all hurt. It’s up to us to put it right and I know beating San Marino doesn’t make it all sweet again, but it’s a positive. Hopefully we can use that to get closer to third place in the table and carry it on to March.

"The last few days have been tough. We all want to be successful. You see the squad now and there's no egos, nobody who's going to throw the toys out of the pram.

"Everyone wants to be part of that group that takes us to the tournament next summer. The air of desperation might put a bit more pressure on but we need to be able to handle that and perform the way we know we can.

"It wasn't good enough in Moscow so it was important to try and right that wrong. It might not have done that quite yet, but it's done a little bit to help.

"It was a good performance and that was needed. The main thing was to put a performance on and get a result and we managed to do that."

"The goalscoring is something I have been working on because I used to be more of a defensive player.

"Credit to the staff at Aston Villa right now, I am working tirelessly on making runs into the box and making myself more useful up the park.

"It seems to be paying off right now so hopefully I can carry it on. The manager and all the coaching staff at Aston Villa have helped me in trying to be more of a goal threat.

"They always do certain things individually, watch a lot of clips and analyse the game. John Terry believes you can be your own man.

"I'm pretty different to everyone he played with – he reminds me of that all the time – and just wants me to work on those late runs into the box.

"I was very raw before and maybe still am a little bit but I'm trying to cut that out and become better all the time.

"There's no better place to do that than Aston Villa. I want to keep taking that responsibility and keep scoring for club and country.

"It's the hardest thing to do in football. I used to find it very difficult but I'm finding a little bit easier and hopefully I can carry on."