

**“Best player in the league?  
You’re not even the best  
player in your house!”**

**Neil Lennon once famously told John McGinn who was generally considered to be the hottest property in the Scottish game: “Best player in the league? You’re not even the best player in your house!”**

‘Lenny’ was referring to John’s brother Stephen who had demonstrated his skills in a 2-0 victory for St Mirren over Hibs two years ago and now the Hibs’ fans will get the chance to judge as Stephen has followed in the footsteps of both brothers by making the 60-mile trip along the M8 to Easter Road.



Hibernian Football Club

Stephen started as a youth player with St Mirren and quickly became a regular fixture in Gus MacPherson’s side where he was hailed for his stunning goal against Rangers that gave Saints a win in the final meeting between the sides at the stadium on Love Street.

During the January 2010 transfer window he left St Mirren for Watford having made 87 appearances in the black and white stripes over which he found the back of the net 8 times.

Life at Watford started well for the midfielder playing alongside top players such as Troy Deeney and Danny Drinkwater, but midway through season 2010/11 he suffered a knee ligament injury which saw him sit out the remainder of

the season as well as the following season. He made his return to football in January 2013 for Shrewsbury who he was loaned out to and at the end of the season David Weir persuaded him to sign for Sheffield United where he joined a certain Jamie Murphy in the Blades' squad.

A loan spell to Dundee in January 2015 led to a permanent move to the Dens Park side but just ahead of the start of the 2015/16 season Stephen headed south again to sign with Wycombe Wanderers where he made 40 appearances before making the return back to St Mirren.

Stephen also picked up 8 caps for the Scotland Under-21 side.

In the summer former team mate Jack Ross invited him to train with Hibs at the club's training centre to regain his fitness and he has helped out by assessing games from the stand and offering words of advice to the Head Coach.

His attitude and undeniable ability led to a one-year contract and he joins his brother Paul in the first-team squad, solving a long-term problem for their parents.

He told Hibernian TV: "When Paul was at Partick Thistle and John was at Hibs I was at St Mirren. My mum was able to go to one game and my dad went to another but there just wasn't enough parents to go round so now, apart from a monthly trip to Birmingham they will be at Easter Road every week.

"When I first came in it was just for training. I absolutely loved it and everyone made me feel welcome. As things progressed and the training went well I thought there might be a chance here and I was desperate to get it done so I'm delighted to get it over the line.

"I used to come and watch John here all the time. I loved coming to the games and always loved playing at this stadium. The club's been very good to John and Paul.

"The manager actually signed Paul for St Mirren just before he left to go to Sunderland and he got better every year. In his last full season at St Mirren he was our 'player of the year' by a landslide. He got every vote for the players' player.

"A large factor is how much the coaching staff know me and trust me that has given me this opportunity. They know what they are going to get from me around the place and what I can bring and do everything I can to help.

"I am desperate to do well. Obviously the boys are flying just now so I'm happy to wait. I still feel I have a bit to offer and Jack knows at my best I can offer something here.

"We were a bit light in staff so when I came in the manager asked me if I would help him out and watch the games from the stand and see what I see. I know exactly what he is looking for from the team like if someone is not doing their job.

"It was something I enjoyed doing but that was only a small part of it. I want to get a couple of reserve games under my belt and see where I am. I had an operation in January and then the lockdown, it's been a long time since I have played. It's not ideal but I've been training all right and I feel fit.

Jack Ross added: "For me, Stephen adds a lot to the group and the environment at Hibernian Training Camp.

"You can never have enough good professionals with leadership qualities and we're fortunate, as I've said repeatedly, to have a great core of those at Hibernian."

John added: Both of my brothers have been an influence because the journey they've been on has been so different. Stephen didn't have as many set-backs as Paul did early in his career. I remember Paul being able to go to many of our games because he was either playing for an amateur team or Queen's Park while he was working.

“People had told him there was no way he could play higher up. The fact he’s now playing in the Premiership at Hibs inspires me. On the other hand, if I complain about things or grumble, I have them saying they would swap me. I’m very fortunate to have that beside me.”