

Lewis Stevenson approaches 500+ appearances for Hibs

Hibs' long-serving defender Lewis Stevenson has overtaken the legendary Eddie Turnbull on the list of the club's all-time record appearance holders. He is now fast approaching 500 appearances for the club.

The unassuming Fifer is a hugely popular figure amongst everyone connected with the club including the supporters, team mates and staff at the Club's training centre due to his modesty, generosity and attitude.



Ladbrokes Scottish Premiereship – Heart of Midlothian v Hibernian.

Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.

26/12/2019.

Pic shows: Fine tackle by Hibs' midfielder, Lewis Stevenson, as Hearts go down 0-2 to Hibernian in the Ladbrokes Scottish Premiereship, Edinburgh Boxing Day derby at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

The Kirkcaldy-born left-back joined the Hibs' youth academy aged 14 and made his competitive debut for in a Scottish League Cup tie at Ayr United in September 2005 although much of the 90-minutes passed him by.

He recollected: "The only think I can remember about the game

was the warm up. I always wore moulded boots but it was wet and greasy and I couldn't wear them so had to go back inside and put on studs. I had the most nervous warm up ever with the ball going under my foot and Stephen Glass at the time put his arm around me and said: "Just relax, you've been doing brilliant in training. You are a good player so just enjoy it."

Stevenson became a first-team regular under the management of John Collins, hitting the headlines as a teenager when he was named man of the match after Hibernian's CIS Cup triumph in 2007 at Hampden Park during the 5-1 demolition of Kilmarnock. In hindsight however his performance on that glorious day possibly held him back.

He continued: "To be honest it probably came to early. I was probably a bit blasé about it and thought this football lark is easy. In my first full season I had won a cup but there was a bit of a barren spell between that and the next cup.

"It was good but it almost hindered me to be known as the young guy that got the man of the match in the cup final. People probably thought I was going to go on and be a better player than what I have been but for me just to get that cup with a great group of guys was amazing."

He remained a regular in the first team under Mixu Paatelainen, John Hughes, Colin Calderwood under whom he won fans' Player of the Year award as a result of his dedication and consistency, Pat Fenlon, Terry Butcher and Alan Stubbs.

On 21 May 2016, Stevenson made history when he lifted the Scottish Cup at Hampden Park after that never to be forgotten 3-2 victory over Rangers becoming the first ever player to win both Scottish national cup competitions with the club. As the 'exuberant' supporters invaded the pitch, Stevenson admitted that he had a different emotion when the final whistle blew.

He said: "It was something I never thought was going to

happen. From my first tour of Ireland, people have been saying 'Is this going to be the year?' I didn't know what they were talking about and had to ask the older players what it was all about.

"The pressure built up every year and there was a weight on our shoulders. I still say that it was more about relief when we won it rather than exuberance or happiness, it was just phew, we have finally done it.

"We've put so much into Hibs over the years it was just the icing on the cake."

That summer Neil Lennon took the reins and Stevenson's performances were key in Hibs' strong defensive showing which again saw him lifting another trophy in the famous green and white jersey, the Ladbrokes Championship and with it, promotion to Scotland's top flight league.

On Sunday 9th July 2017, almost 10,000 fans turned out at Easter Road for his testimonial match against Sunderland and generously he donated much of the proceeds to two charities, CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) in memory of Hibs Academy player David Paul who in 2014 sadly passed away aged only 18, having suffered from ischaemic heart disease, a disease characterised by a reduced blood supply to the heart.

He also made donations to various other charities in the Edinburgh area while a further sum was given to the Bradley Lowery Foundation set up in memory of the six-year-old Sunderland fan who died from a rare cancer.

Stevenson enjoyed an outstanding campaign during that season which saw Hibs finish fourth in their return to the top flight of Scottish football. His performances didn't go unnoticed, and Scotland manager Alex McLeish included him in the 24-man squad for a Scotland international challenge trip to South America where along with team-mate Dylan McGeouch he made an accomplished international Scotland debut during a 2-0 defeat

by Peru in Lima.

This season under Jack Ross, Stevenson has started the campaign on the bench due to the form of up and coming youngster Josh Doig but far from being bitter, he has nothing but praise for his rival and has done much to help his progress.

He continued: "I know what it's like for young boys coming through especially the pressure via social media. Everything builds up and it's hard for them. If I can help in football terms and their life perspective I will do so.

"Josh has come in and been fantastic. He has so many attributes it's not real, to make him a top player for Hibs and hopefully for him to move on to bigger and better things. It's helped me that he is such a great guy and if I can help him that is the next step in my career.

"I've played against a lot of these players in the league and I've been able to give him little tips on how they play and help him. He's been doing a good job so far."



Ladbroke's Scottish Premiership – Heart of Midlothian v Hibernian.

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Pic shows: A sore one for Hibs' midfielder, Lewis Stevenson, as he's upended by Hearts' French midfielder, Loic Damour, as Hearts go down 0-2 to Hibernian in the Ladbroke's Scottish Premiership, Edinburgh Boxing Day derby at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

Stevenson remains a favourite amongst the Hibs' fans for his outstanding contribution over the years and will hopefully continue to grace the Easter Road turf for many years to come. Looking back he is delighted with his career although he accepts that he was probably a better player than he gave

himself credit for.

He concluded: "Even when I made my debut I never thought that I'd have a long term career as I thought I was lucky to be involved in football. I was pinching myself when I got my debut and maybe sometimes I'm a bit down on myself. I was a lot better player than I sometimes give myself credit for and maybe that's been detrimental for me.

"Looking back whatever happens from now I'm delighted with what I have done in football but I feel I can give a bit more."

Hibs' Head Coach Jack Ross remains full of praise and admiration for the veteran defender.

He said: "For a player who's achieved what he has at this club, there's nothing that would suggest that he has that swagger about him.

"He's won both domestic cup competitions with the club and achieved promotions, his temperament is brilliant, and his contribution when he came on the park last week is just how he is.

"He's been here that long that I played against him a lot before I retired.

"By his own admission he's been a bit up and down in pre-season, so I think the fact he was able to come on and play so well was good for him."

He added: "To achieve what he has done in terms of tangible success is brilliant, and he's made that progression from academy player to first team.

"He's still a big part of what we're doing here, he'll play a big part this season and he'll be a big help for Josh as well."



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