

Former Hibs defender John McNamee dies aged 83

Former Hibs defender 'Big Bad' John McNamee was died aged 83.

The not so gentle giant who was a huge favourite amongst the Hibs fans was born in Coatbridge, Scotland, on 11th June 1941.

He joined Celtic as a teenager from Bellshill Athletic and played in the 1963 Scottish Cup final defeat to Rangers.

In April 1964 he moved to Easter Road, becoming Jock Stein's first signing after taking charge.

He made his debut at Easter Road in a 5-2 victory over East Stirlingshire then scored the first of his 12-goals the following week in a 1-1 draw away to Dundee United.

In total John played 129 times for Hibs and helped the club to Summer Cup triumph, beating Aberdeen 3-1 at Pittodrie in a replay.

Highlights include the famous 2-0 victory over Real Madrid in a Challenge match at Easter Road which was followed by a 4-2 victory over Rangers at Ibrox.

His final game came in a 5-2 home defeat to St Johnstone on Christmas Eve 1966.

Ater that month joined Newcastle United and helped save them from relegation.

He went onto make 132 appearances under manager Joe Harvey, scoring eight goals in a five-year career on Tyneside.

A key member of the 1969 Inter Cities Fairs Cup winning squad, John is still remembered remembered for swinging on the crossbar at Roker Park after netting a late equaliser against Sunderland in a 3-3 draw in December 1967.

After leaving Newcastle in 1971, McNamee played for Blackburn Rovers, Hartlepool United, Lancaster City and Workington as player/ manager before retiring in 1976.

He subsequently worked as a postman in Cockermouth and suffered a serious injury in a head on collision.

In his latter years he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease which robbed him of so many treasured memories and then Parkinson's Disease.

Both Pat Stanton and Sir Alex Ferguson mentioned John in their respective biographies and many Hibs and Newcastle United fans have taken to the fans' forums to share their memories of the larger than life character.

Hibernian posted the following message on social media: "Hibernian FC is saddened to learn of the passing of former player John McNamee.

"Our thoughts are with John's friends and family."

A Newcastle United spokesperson said: "We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our former defender John McNamee at the age of 83.

"Our thoughts are with John's family and friends at this time.