

Hibs to recreate historic fixture against German champions

As part of its 150th Anniversary celebrations, Hibs will host German-side Rot-Weiss Essen at Easter Road – recreating a fixture of huge significance in both the club's and British Football history.

In September 1955, Hibs became the first British team to play in Europe – accepting an invitation to join the 16-team tournament and participating in the first ever European Cup (now known as the UEFA Champions League).

Hibs were invited to play in the competition by Gabriel Hanot – the editor of the French newspaper L'Équipe – who spearheaded the idea of bringing together the best teams across the continent to compete against one another domestically.

The idea was supported by UEFA and Hibs joined AC Milan (Italy), AGF Aarhus (Denmark), Anderlecht (Belgium), Djurgården (Sweden), Gwardia Warszawa (Poland), Partizan (Yugoslavia), PSV (Netherlands), Rapid Wien (Austria), Real Madrid (Spain), Rot-Weiss Essen (West Germany), Saarbrücken (Saar), Servette (Switzerland), Sporting CP (Portugal), Stade de Reims (France), and Vörös Lobogó (Hungary) in the first-ever European Cup.

Hibs were drawn against the German side Rot-Weiss Essen in the first round, with the first leg taking place at the Georg-Melches-Stadion in Germany.

The team that took to the field included four of the iconic 'Famous Five' line-up with Gordon Smith, Lawrie Reilly, Eddie Turnbull and Willie Ormond all named in the starting XI. The Hibeers' relished the challenge and swept aside the German outfit – with Eddie Turnbull opening the scoring after 35 minutes and becoming the first British player to score in a European game. Turnbull added a second with Reilly and Ormond also finding the back of the net as we took a resounding 0-4 lead back to Easter Road.

30,000 people made it along to the return leg on home soil, with the teams playing out a 1-1 draw on the night to secure safe passage into the quarter-finals with a 5-1 aggregate scoreline.

John Buchanan scored the goal at Easter Road – writing his name into the history books as the first British player to score a European goal on home soil.

Hibs went on to progress through the quarter-finals, beating Djurgården over two legs by an aggregate score of 4-1.

With the European final in their sights, Hibs eventually fell short – losing to French side Reims in the semi-final, with Real Madrid going on to lift their first of 15 European Cups.

Since that first match with Rot-Weiss Essen in 1955, Hibs have gone on to play over 100 games in European competition, creating many memorable moments across the continent over the last 70 years.

Now, to mark the club's 150th Anniversary and the 70th Anniversary of this 'First', Hibs have announced that it will be recreating this historic fixture and hosting German side

Rot-Weiss Essen for a very special pre-season friendly at Easter Road on Wednesday 9th July 2025. This will be the first time Rot-Weiss Essen have returned to Easter Road since 1955.

Full fixture details for the match, will be released in due course – including ticket information and kick-off times.