

One Club Man

August 2012

So how to follow on from last month's article covering the 5-1 Scottish Cup Final victory over Hibernian? Well given that the players and management of that Hearts side seem to be departing before the hangovers it seems appropriate that we look back at a less well-known tournament that the two Edinburgh clubs contested. The Festival Cup.

The idea for the Cup was initially put forward by City of Edinburgh Council who expressed a desire to organise a senior football tournament to coincide with the Edinburgh International Festival. A previous 'Festival Trophy had been staged in 1979 when, with Hearts in the First Division, Manchester City and Coventry City made up a four-team tournament won by Coventry. However, that proved to be a one-off and the new Festival Cup was to be contested between Hearts and Hibs initially with hopes that teams from cities with which Edinburgh was twinned, such as Kiev and Munich, would make it a tournament in future years.

Accordingly, the first tie was set for Easter Road on August 2nd 2003. There was scepticism, however not least because Hearts and Hibs would meet at least three times a season in the League and matters were not helped when - despite pleas from organisers - the first League Derby of the season was scheduled just a fortnight after the Festival Cup tie. And at Easter Road too.

The tournament was organised relatively late and that is reflected in the fact that the Bank of Scotland only became sponsors in the weeks before the game. This helped the profile of the Cup, however and the first item of memorabilia I have is an A2, colour poster which was 'liberated' from a local library. Featuring respective skippers Ian Murray and Steven Pressley it had the basic fixture details and 'ticket hotlines.'

In the event a crowd of 10,090 turned up and Hibernian used their standard ticket format of the time although the name of the sponsors is absent from the competition. The programme too was relatively standard with 52 pages for £2 – four short of the issue for the League Derby a fortnight later. The new Cup is given a close-up photograph on the cover and that also confirms this as a 'Handbook' issue. Manager, Bobby Williamson opened with his notes and there he wrote that "the Festival Cup gives both ourselves and Hearts an opportunity to prepare for the new season with another testing match". He then reflected on a similarly testing friendly against Sunderland the previous week. Page seven previewed the opening game of the season at Tannadice as well as the first match at Easter Road which was of course against Hearts. "The computer that draws up the fixture list is clearly a cold and calculating machine." the Editorial noted dryly.

Text and adverts generally shared adjacent pages throughout the issue but visitors, Hearts were accorded a double-page spread on pages 10 and 11 which was primarily taken up with photos of summer signings, Paul Hartley (ex-Hibernian), Patrick Kisnorbo and Dennis Wyness. Alongside that is a small column on the Cup itself with Hearts Chief Executive, Chris Robinson declaring the future of the Cup "might, for example involve inviting Clubs from some of Edinburgh's twin cities to come and take part in a mini-tournament in future years. When you think that these twin cities include

places such as Barcelona and Munich you can see the possibilities." The key word there is "might".

There are then two more pages on Manager, Craig Levein with former Hibs Captain, Pat Stanton laying claim to discovering the future Scotland International (and Manager) whilst at Cowdenbeath. Amidst the adverts there is one for a forthcoming 'Edinburgh Evening News' promotion to find the greatest post-war Hearts and Hibs sides. This would see an A3, colour poster given away the following month. Following that is a page on Hibernian's last Derby win in October 2001.

New Hibernian goalkeeper, Morten Hyldgaard is then profiled at length although a search online shows me he was destined never to make a full appearance for the Easter Road side and had retired a year later. A match report on the 2-2 draw with Sunderland then follows before 'Letters to the Editor' which has two historical queries. The 'Hibernian CV' gives a brief history of the club before the centre pages have a statistical analysis of the previous season. The second-half of the programme has significantly less reading – 11 of the final 16 pages are adverts including a page-sized version of the match poster – but there is still space for 'Classic Programmes from Famous Games' which is provided by John Litster and looks at the issue for the 1966 World Cup Final. The final historical coverage looks back at Hibernian's Championship winning season of 1947-48.

Despite being used as a warm-up for the campaign ahead it was still a typical Derby although it was Hearts who eased to a relatively comfortable victory with Andy Webster heading the only goal in the first-half. However, as the Hearts fans waited after the final whistle for the trophy to be presented it was promptly announced the Police wouldn't allow it! The trophy apparently arrived at Tynecastle the following Monday in the back of a Hibernian Director's car and the incident hardly helped the fledgling Cup.

Nonetheless, the Cup was declared enough of a success to be proposed for the following year. However, the actual arrangements proved more tricky with Hibernian's decision to enter the Inter-Toto Cup meaning there was only one free Saturday in July and August. However, Hearts promptly arranged a friendly with Fulham for that day. Ironically, Hibs then crashed out of the Inter-Toto Cup in the first round and promptly had to arrange several friendlies to fill the gaps. One of those included a match with Leeds United for the White and Mackay Trophy which was designed to be an annual contest between the sides. Leeds United won the first edition 3-1 at Easter Road but no prizes for guessing they are still awaiting a return fixture.

Finally, Saturday September 4th – left free to accommodate International fixtures – was agreed although this was just before the closure of the Festival which it was supposed to mark. Hardly surprising then that the 'Scotsman' newspaper declared "The cup dream has sadly runneth dry."

Nonetheless, whilst plans for a senior tournament had stalled the under-15 'Twin Cities' tournament went ahead earlier that summer with Bayern Munich, Fiorentina, Xi'an (China), Kiev and of course, Hearts and Hibs all taking part. The teams were split into two groups of three with matches played at Edinburgh University's Peffermill facility and it was Hearts and Fiorentina who emerged to contest the Final. I don't actively collect issues from below professional youth

level but I do have the only publication for this tournament – a double-sided teamsheet for 'Finals' day which was held at Meadowbank.

The sheet lists all six teams with Kiev claiming fifth place after defeating Xi'an 6-1, Hibernian taking third (beating Bayern 16-15 on penalties after a 0-0 draw) and of course the Final which saw Hearts defeat Fiorentina 1-0 thanks to a goal by Marc McCusker. He and Ross Hamilton were the only ones from the Hearts side to make it anywhere near the first team and I don't recognise anyone 'names' from the other sides either. Needless to say the tournament was declared a success....and never staged again.

Two months later the first-team game finally went ahead. Despite a crowd of just 7,282 – and Hearts supporters' groups calling for a boycott in protest at the Tynecastle Board - the match was ticketed and Hearts used their ordinary template for the season which featured the chest - and sponsor's logo - of a Hearts player. The relative importance is also evident from the fact that Hearts issued a 32-page programme for £2 instead of the normal 64. In tiny print on the cover is the note that the match was dedicated to the late Gordon Smith – the 'Prince of Wingers' who had starred for both clubs in the fifties and sixties and who had sadly passed away the previous month. Strangely, though there was no dedicated content to Gordon within the issue.

Manager Craig Levein makes similarly brief mention of the Cup in his notes preferring to reflect on the previous week's defeat to Motherwell and the forthcoming UEFA Cup tie against SC Braga which would be played at Murrayfield. Skipper, Steven Pressley then previews the match but doesn't mention that he would be absent due to International duty with Scotland. Hibernian were now managed by Tony Mowbray and the pen pictures reveal the 'golden generation' of Murray, Brown, O'Connor and Riordan. Chairman George Foulkes then provides a third welcome and the only mention of Gordon Smith in which he confirms that members of Smith's family would be present that afternoon. The centre-pages have a report from the defeat at Fir Park before a further report on the 3-0 win over Kilmarnock the week prior to that. New signing Ramon Pereira is then profiled in the 'Lochinvar Interview' which was sponsored by the double-glazing company. An obituary of Willie Duff concludes the issue on the inside-back page. Duff was goalkeeper as Hearts defeated Celtic 3-1 in the 1956 Scottish Cup Final.

More so than the previous year, each side took the opportunity to field mixed sides and Hearts included youngsters such as David McGeown, Calum Elliot and Craig Sives. Goals from Sives, Wyness and De Vries countered a Dobbie penalty and secured the Cup for a second successive season. And skipper for the day, Robbie Neilson was even allowed to collect the trophy on the pitch this time.

Tentative plans were muted for the following season but there was a distinct lack of enthusiasm from either club and when early starts to the next campaign in European competition ruled out the third edition once more it was clear the Cup had no future. Thus, another short-lived Cup slipped into history leaving the Edinburgh International Festival to try and survive without football.

Enjoy your collecting – whatever it may be!

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