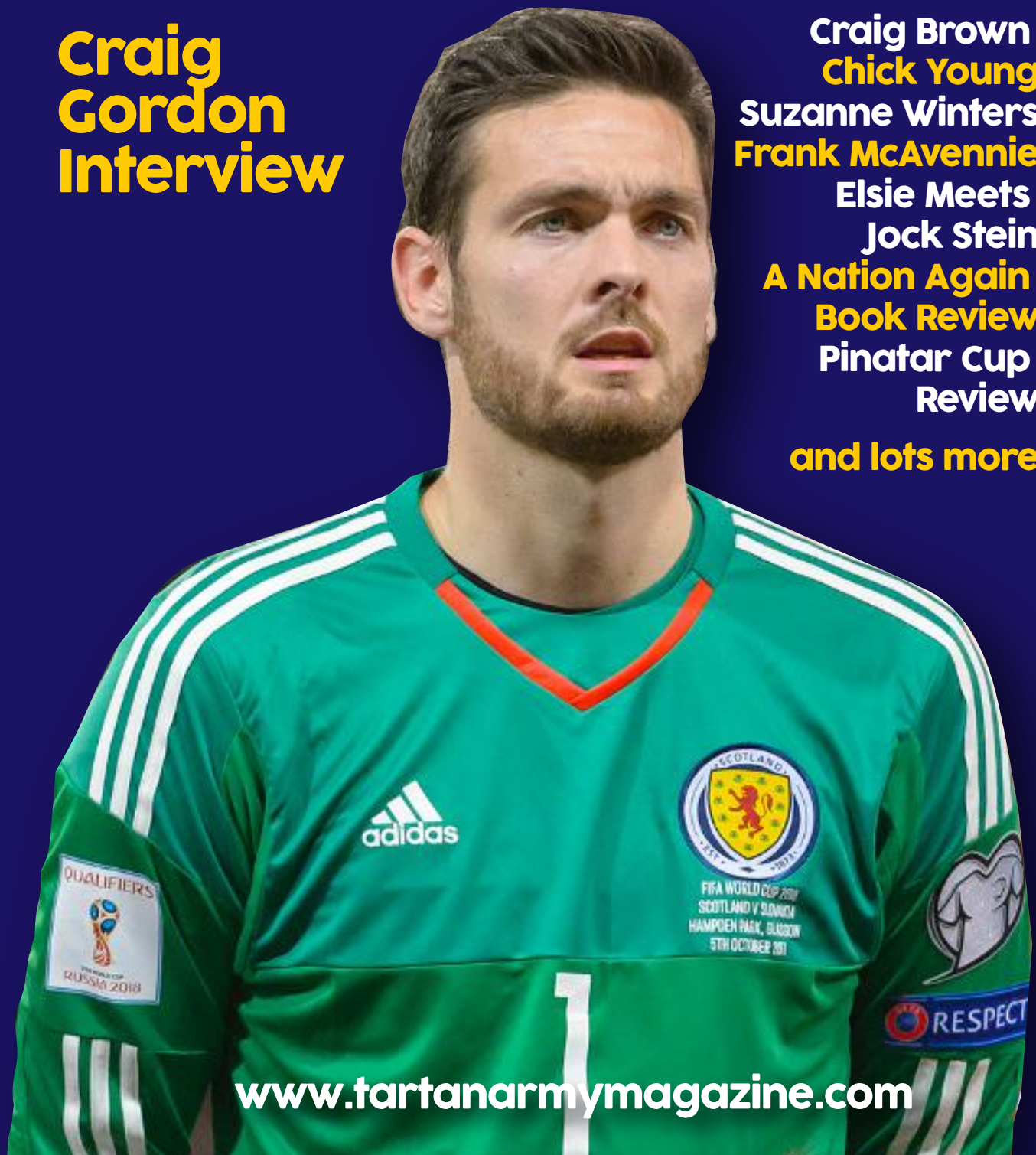
FAMOUS TARTAN ARMY MAGAZINE

Est 2005

2023_ISSUE 1

DEDICATED TO THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM & SUPPORTERS

Craig Gordon Interview



Craig Brown
Chick Young
Suzanne Winters
Frank McAvennie
Elsie Meets Jock Stein
A Nation Again Book Review
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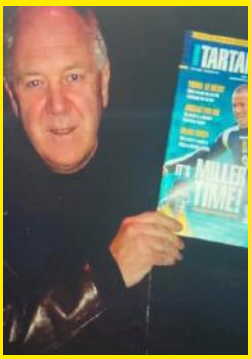


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STEVE CLARKE
In his own words...

The Scots finished top of their section and gained promotion to Nations League elite level, and also securing a Euro 2024 play-off place.

Reflecting on the progress made Steve said I think we want to improve. You see it in the players and their performances. It's nice to have the safety net of the play-offs but I feel we can qualify outright. I would expect this team to qualify directly. We want to qualify as of right. We've had enough of those play-offs.

On the qualifying group games that lie ahead
Let's just try and qualify directly. That would be much better. It's a tough competitive group and I'd imagine teams will drop points along the way. It's about winning games that you have to win. It'll be a competitive group. Tough games. But games we'll look forward to. It could have been an easier draw, but in a strange way that probably suits us. The Scottish mentality is always to try and do well against teams we're not expected to do well against. I'm reasonably happy with the draw.

On the first game versus Cyprus
We've got recent history against Cyprus. My first game as head coach was against Cyprus. We know them quite well and I know their coach Temuri Ketsbaia. I worked with him briefly at Newcastle so we know a little bit what to expect there.

Spain
Obviously Spain as the pot one team are tough opponents. But we think we're improving, we think we're getting better so let's see what the games bring.

Georgia
Not for me personally, but Scotland has got some strange memories, some bad memories, from Georgia so it's a chance to put that right.

Norway
We know the threats they've got and it's a tough game.

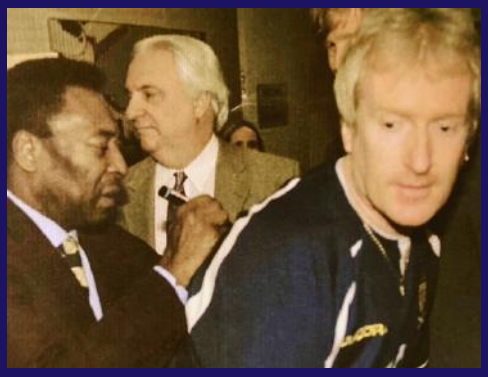


Photo by Colin Robinson Imaging

FAMOUS TARTAN ARMY MAGAZINE

Est 2005

Welcome to the 2023, issue1 of Famous Tartan Army Magazine.



A lot has happened in the world of football since our last publication. The World Cup in Qatar had some fantastic matches with none more exciting than the final itself. The World Cup is THE showcase for football, and so lets hope we take our rightful place at the next tournament, which is being hosted by Canada, Mexico and the USA in 2026.

The World Cup has always produced heroes, this time it was Messi, but looking back, for me as a boy, it was the great Pele. So it was very sad news to hear of his passing. It seemed fitting in some way, that our last issue of the magazine, published before his death, would feature him on the front cover. I was fortunate to meet the great man in New York some years ago when I was over there for a tartan army football match as part of tartan week celebrations. I had interviewed Mo Johnston for the magazine and he informed me that Pele was in town. I duly made my way to the press conference, and when he walked in he came straight up to me, I then hugged and kissed him before he signed my Scotland top. It was amazing! I then sat in his presence, along with the great Franz Beckenbauer as they talked about their time playing for The New York Cosmo's back in the 70's. They say never meet your heroes, well I can put that one to bed, as he was as great off the field as he was on it. He had time for everyone and apart from being a great ambassador for football; he was always promoting social justice for all.

And so back to the national game in Scotland, everyone involved in producing this magazine wishes all the squads the best of luck in the forthcoming campaigns in 2023.

A huge thank you, to everyone who has contributed to this issue (the team are photographed below). Finally I would like to welcome Craig Brown and Frank McAvennie to our team, and look forward to their contributions in the year ahead.

Iain Emerson Editor



Iain Emerson
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Chief Feature Writer



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Photographer



Alistair Aird



Hazel Guilder



Craig Brown



Frank McAvennie



Elsie Cook



Chick Young



Michael McEwan

This Issues Content

4-7 Scotland's Mens Roll Of Honour
8 Scotland's Women's National Team Pinatar Cup Review
10-11 Suzanne Winters Interview
12-13 Craig Brown Column
14 Scotland's Football Supporter's Association
16 Chick Young Column
18 A Nation Again Book Launch
18 Association of Tartan Army Clubs
20 Elsie Cook Column
22 A Nation Again Book Launch
24 Tartan Army Children's Charity
26 Frank McAvennie Column
26-27 Sean Graham International Memorial Trophy 2023
28 Ready to go again for euro 2024
28 SFA celebrates 150th anniversary of the national game

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SCOTLAND MEN'S INTERNATIONAL ROLL OF HONOUR

CRAIG GORDON

by Alistair Aird

There have been a few occasions in the history of our national team when the Scotland goalkeeper has been lampooned and laughed at. Stewart Kennedy, a star turn in the successful Rangers side of the early to mid-1970s, was the butt of many jokes after he shipped five goals at Wembley in 1975, and even Alan Rough copped some flak after losing three goals against Peru during the World Cup in Argentina in 1978.

But there's a saying about laughing last and loudest, and in recent years the laughter from the Tartan Army has been raucous given that a number of the goalkeepers who have donned the gloves for Scotland have comfortably fitted into the 'world class' category. One of them is Craig Gordon.

Born on Hogmanay 1982, Craig Sinclair Gordon has been capped 74 times at senior level thus securing his place in the pantheon of greats that make up the International Roll of Honour. Gordon is one of only three goalkeepers to make the list, the others being Jim Leighton and Alan Rough. And although Gordon is unlikely to supplant Leighton as our most capped goalkeeper – the former Aberdeen and Manchester United man earned 91 caps – you wouldn't rule out Gordon adding to his total once he returns to fitness after his recent horrific double leg break. Gordon's path to international recognition began at Curriehill Primary School.

'I was left footed so for my first ever game of football for the school team I was put out on the left wing,' recalled Gordon. 'We got beaten 8-0! I remember thinking I could have stopped a few of them, so after a few more games, my outfield career ended, and I went in goal. Later that same season, we played the same team, and we drew 1-1. My destiny to be a goalie was set after that.'

He added, 'I would have been either Primary 4 or Primary 5 then, but by the time I was in Primary 5 I was playing for the Primary 6 team. I enjoyed that, the challenge of playing against kids that were a couple of years older than me.'

Gordon grew up supporting Heart of Midlothian, and two Tynecastle custodians became his early footballing heroes.

'The Hearts goalies at that time were Henry Smith and Nicky Walker,' said Gordon. 'I looked up to them both and wanted to be like them. I speak to Henry from time to time as he does the lounges at Tynecastle on matchdays. I've now managed to equal his record of European appearances for the club, and hopefully after I recover from injury [the double leg break] I can get closer to his all-time total.'

In addition to playing for his school team, Gordon also played for Tynecastle Boys Club. He also tried his hand with an oval ball too.

'I started with Tynecastle Boys Club when I was in Primary 7,' said Gordon. 'I had a couple of really successful seasons with them. Gary Kirk was the manager, and a few years later, he was the manager of Cowdenbeath when I went there on loan. He now looks after the Hearts B team, so we have pretty much followed each other around since I was 12 or 13 years old.'

He added, 'I would play for the school team on a Saturday morning [after leaving Curriehill, Gordon went to Balerno High School] then Tynecastle Boys Club on the Saturday afternoon. I would then play rugby on a Sunday, so my weekends would be taken up playing sport.'

The natural progression from Tynecastle Boys Club was Hearts, and Gordon joined his boyhood heroes, although he was never considered as first choice for the youth team. 'More often than not I found myself on the bench,' recalled Gordon. 'It was reckoned I was too small at that stage of my career. Until I was 15, I was 5' 9". Hearts actually let me go as I wasn't going to be offered a full-time

contract, so I had to look elsewhere.' But at that stage Lady Luck intervened.

'Hearts weren't able to find a new goalkeeper between the start of the season and the start of the Youth Cup,' said Gordon. 'You could play an overage goalkeeper in the Youth League matches, but not in the Youth Cup. Before the first game, Hearts didn't have anyone and I was still unattached, so I was signed on an 18-month contract.'

Gordon played in the Youth Cup matches in season 1999/2000, with Hearts making it all the way to the Final against Rangers at Hampden. The Edinburgh side won 5-3 in what was Gordon's first experience of playing at the National Stadium.

He recalled, 'I have great memories from that match. I had a good game and made some good saves in what was a high-quality match. A lot of the players that played for both sides went on to have good careers at a high level. But for my own development it was a huge match. I had been signed at the last minute, but afterwards I signed a four-year deal to stay at the club.'

The wheels were now in motion. Craig Gordon's career as a professional footballer had now started in earnest.

He said, 'I was on the groundstaff at Hearts. I would come in at 8am and get all the kit ready for the players before training. I would then travel with the team to wherever they were training and help things set up for the session. I would then take part in training before helping collect all the equipment and kit at the end of the session and take it back to Tynecastle where we would get it washed and ready for the next day.'

The first team goalkeeper at Tynecastle in 2001 was the Finnish international, Antti Niemi, and he would have a huge influence on Gordon's fledgling career.

'Antti was a fantastic goalkeeper,' said Gordon. 'He had a really laid-back attitude to training and playing, and our personalities were similar. He also had a background in ice hockey, and he used a lot of the techniques he had learned such as saving low shots with his feet rather than using his hands. I tapped into that and started to introduce that into my own game.'

He added, 'Giles Rousset was also still with Hearts at that time. He was a tall, commanding goalkeeper who was great on cross balls. His handling was fantastic too. To work with both Antti and Giles, goalkeepers with contrasting styles, at such a young age was great for my development. Roddy McKenzie, who was one of the younger goalkeepers at Hearts, also took time to work with me, often staying behind after training to help me and give me advice.'

As was the case with a lot of young goalkeepers of that era, Gordon spent time out on loan, and in season 2001/02, he found himself joining the Blue Brazil, Cowdenbeath. 'I was only 18 when I went there,' said Gordon. 'I had only just finished playing U18 football with Hearts, so this was my first taste of playing football against men. All of a sudden, results mattered. If you lost a game in the Youth League, it didn't really matter as much as losing games in league football where there were bonuses at stake.'

Cowdenbeath were in the Scottish Second Division - now League One – when Gordon joined them. They had won promotion as Third Division runners-up in season 2000/01, so their main objective the following season was survival.

Gordon added, 'It was a great experience for me. Cowdenbeath were only part-time, but the players put so much effort into training. It was pretty much the same as what a full-time side would do. Going there also brought home to me what could happen if I didn't stick in with Hearts. Training would be at night, and the amount of effort the players put in to get fit for the game at the weekend was commendable.'

With a clutch of senior games under his belt, Gordon returned to Tynecastle looking to use the experience gained to stake a claim for a place in the first-team squad. But although Niemi left Hearts to join Southampton, Roddy McKenzie and Tepi Moilanen played the majority of the games in season 2002/03. However, Gordon did play twice for the first team. He was also capped for Scotland at U21-level.

'I can't remember too much about the call-up to the U21s, but I do remember playing the second half of the match against Israel,' recalled Gordon. 'There was a lot of security around and that was nerve wracking. We saw a lot of protests as we travelled to the stadium, so it was a bit of a baptism of fire for a young player.'

Season 2003/04 would prove to be Gordon's breakout year at both club and international level. He played in 29 of the 38 league games and 35 times in total for Hearts, and on 30 May 2004, he won his first senior cap against Trinidad & Tobago at Easter Road. He was also voted Young Player of the Year by the Scottish Football Writers Association (SFWA).

'That season everything just fell right for me,' said Gordon. 'I managed to get into the Hearts team for a game against Partick Thistle that we won 4-1. I kept my place in the team after that, and everything seemed to snowball from there. We went on a good run during which I had some good performances. That gave me confidence, and I felt I had now proven to myself that I could play at this level. You always have doubts you can do it, but to come in at the age of 20/21 and play almost a full season in the Premier League and maintain the necessary levels of consistency was something I was very pleased with. It was all very new and exciting, and I pretty much rode that wave through to the end of the season.'

A steady season at club level followed for Gordon. Hearts reached the last four of both the Scottish Cup and Scottish League Cup and finished third in the league table. There would be a further seven caps for Scotland too. One of them came on a chastening night for the Scotland manager, Berti Vogts, in the Stadionul Republican in Chisinau, Moldova.

'I got a handful of caps under Berti,' said Gordon. 'I was 21 when I got my first cap which was pretty young for a goalkeeper to get international experience. But Berti did that with a lot of players like James McFadden and Darren Fletcher, so there was a group of us that came through at a similar time. Those early international experiences helped us in the long run, but it didn't help Berti. Instead, it was the managers that followed him that got the benefit from that.'

He added, 'The game in Moldova was a very difficult one on a horrible pitch. Steven Thompson scored for us, but we didn't manage to win the match, and Walter took over not long after that. He was great at keeping things simple and giving us clear instructions of what he wanted us to do. He didn't over-complicate things and he was a really good man-manager. Walter knew how to get the best out of players, he galvanised us and everybody wanted to win for him.'

Smith's first match in charge ended in defeat – Scotland lost 2-0 against Italy in Milan on 26 March 2005 – and that night Gordon, who came on as sub for Rab Douglas after 51 minutes, came up against the player he rates as the toughest he has faced at international level, Andrea Pirlo.

'Pirlo had scored a free-kick past Rab in the first half and then he did the same thing to me in the second,' said Gordon. 'We had done well in the game, but there's not really much you can do when a player of that quality puts the ball right into the top corner. Pirlo was outstanding in the game, and it was those two moments of brilliance from him that made the difference on the night.'

Gordon won the first of many winner's medals at club level in season 2005/06, helping Hearts defeat Gretna in the Final of the Scottish Cup, and his stellar displays saw him crowned the SFWA Player of the Year.

Gordon also excelled at international level as Scotland fought to qualify for the 2006 World Cup. There would be a memorable draw against Italy at Hampden, but ultimately Scotland didn't make it to Germany, finishing third in Group 5 behind Italy and Norway.

'After making the start we did it was about getting as many points as we could after that,' said Gordon. 'There were a few close-run



Continued

things, but we didn't get over the line and that was disappointing.'

The opposition goalkeeper for the match against Italy was Gigi Buffon, one of the world's greatest. But he was fulsome in his praise of Gordon for his performance in the 1-1 draw at the National Stadium.

'He is one of the legends of football, a goalkeeping great,' said Gordon. 'For him to be saying such positive things about me was a huge boost. I looked up to him then and I still do now. To still be playing for Parma at the age of 45 is an incredible achievement. I'm five years behind him, but since they keep stretching the boundaries of what is possible, I might be able to manage that too.'

Focus now turned to qualification for the next major tournament, Euro 2008. And as seems to be our wont, Scotland were going to have to do it the hard way! Alongside them in Group B were Italy, France, Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia, and the Faroe Islands.

Yet again it would be a story of 'so near yet so far'. But the usual rollercoaster ride brought the incredible highs of wins home and away against France, with the 1-0 win in Paris seeing Gordon lay claim to an assist for one of the most memorable Scotland goals of recent years.

'I was aiming for Lee McCulloch, but I'm still claiming the assist,' laughed Gordon. 'People talk more about assists now than they did back then, but by the letter of the law, that was definitely an assist.'

But by the time James McFadden's stunning shot in the Parc de Princes arced over the head of Mickaël Landreau in Paris, Scotland were under new management – Alex McLeish had taken over when Walter Smith went back to rescue Rangers - and Gordon was plying his trade in England.

'Alex kept doing what Walter was doing as it was working,' revealed Gordon. 'There were a few little changes here and there, but overall, the squads were similar, and the same players were still being selected. We were on a good run, so we tried to keep that going as best we could.'

In the end, in typical Scottish fashion, there would be glorious failure. Needing a win against Italy at Hampden to qualify, we lost 2-1. But Gordon is adamant that a refereeing decision played a decisive role in the outcome.

'One of the biggest disappointments of my career,' was Gordon's rueful reflection. 'In the last minute the referee awarded a free kick to Italy, but it should have been a free kick for Scotland. That decision will always baffle me. They scored from the free kick too.'

He added, 'With time running out, a draw wasn't good enough for us, so we had to throw caution to the wind and leave players up the pitch. They slung a ball into the box and scored from it. Under normal circumstances, we would have had more players back defending, but as it was so late in the game, we had to push for the win.'

Scotland lost to the Italians on 17 November 2007. By that point, Craig Gordon was a £9 million player having left Hearts to join Sunderland a couple of months earlier. At the time that was record transfer fee, the highest any British club had paid for a goalkeeper. But Gordon's time in England would be blighted by injury.

'My first injury was a cracked bone in my ankle,' said Gordon. 'I came back then did the same again in my first match. That ruled me out for three months, and when I came back I broke my arm in a match against Spurs at White Hart Lane. I had a metal plate inserted in my arm, came back, and played the rest of the season then had the plate removed. In pre-season I then broke the same arm, and the metal plate was put back in. I probably missed between nine and 12 months of football as a result.'

He continued, 'I then injured my knee, partially tearing the patella tendon. I had an operation then came back and tore it again which meant more surgery. After that it was all about periods of rest and rehabilitation before I could resume my career a couple of years later.'

When Gordon was fit to play again, he was a free agent. After making just 94 appearances in his five seasons with Sunderland, he was released in May 2012.

'It crossed my mind that my career might be over at that stage,' reflected Gordon. 'I was in pain every day. Even simple things like walking down stairs and kneeling on the floor to play with the kids was painful, and I thought that was something I was going to have to live with for the rest of my life. But as the first year wore on, things started to improve, and I thought at that point I might have a chance to get back playing again.'

For a while it looked like it would be Rangers would be the team with whom Gordon would resurrect his career.

'Jim Stewart, who I had worked with at international level and at Hearts, was the goalkeeping coach at Rangers and he invited me in to see if the physio at the club could help me,' said Gordon. 'I was there for about eight or nine months, and at that point Rangers wanted me to play in a couple of reserve games to have a look at me and see if I was still up to playing matches. But for a bit of security, I needed a contract offer rather than playing on a trial basis. Rangers were going for the League One title and had Cammy Bell and Steve Simonsen, two fantastic options to choose from. They didn't really need a third goalkeeper, so it wasn't really a good option for either party.'

An offer would be forthcoming for Gordon, though, and it came from the other side of the great Glasgow divide. At the start of season 2014/15, Craig Gordon signed for Celtic.

At that point in time, he hadn't played for Scotland since winning his 40th cap in a 3-0 win over the Faroe Islands on 16 November 2010. However, his impressive early appearances for Celtic earned Gordon a return to the international fold, and cap number 41 came against England in friendly at Parkhead on 18 November 2014.

'Once I started training again, I hoped I could get back to the level I was at prior to the injury,' said Gordon. 'But once I signed for Celtic, I revaluated that; my aim now was to be even better than I was before. That meant getting back into the national team too, and that was another driving factor for me.'

Gordon came off the bench for what would be a 3-1 defeat against England, but by the time Scotland faced England in the qualification campaign for the 2018 World Cup, he was back in the starting XI. The Scots were drubbed 3-0 at Wembley but came agonisingly close to beating the Auld Enemy at Hampden. Two late free kicks from Leigh Griffiths looked to have secured a 2-1 win only for Harry Kane to nick an equalising goal in the dying embers of the contest.

'Until we scored, we didn't really look like we were in the match,' said Gordon. 'But we turned it around and found ourselves in a winning position. Not being able to see the game out was disappointing, and that was one of the worst feelings I had playing for Scotland.'

Just short of four months after that epic draw at Hampden, Gordon was between the posts for a 1-0 win over Slovakia. It was his 50th senior cap. The only other goalkeepers to earn a half century of caps for Scotland had been Alan Rough and Jim Leighton.

'That was a massive moment for me,' revealed Gordon. 'Once you start playing for Scotland you want to get as many caps as you can, and not too many players in the history of our game have won 50 caps. And to be able to continue and pick up even more has been great.'



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Continued

Gordon was also enjoying success at club level too. He was voted Player of the Year by the Scottish Football Writers Association again in season 2014/15, and during his time with Celtic, he won five Scottish Premiership titles, two Scottish Cups, and five Scottish League Cups. But Gordon lost his place to Fraser Forster when Forster returned to Parkhead on loan from Southampton, and in June 2020, he decided to leave Celtic and return to Hearts.

Gordon also lost his place in the Scotland team too. After pulling on the gloves for a 3-1 defeat against Portugal at Hampden on 14 October 2018, Gordon didn't play for the national team again until he was recalled by Steve Clarke, pulling on a Scotland jersey for the first time in two years in a 1-0 defeat against Slovakia in a Nations League match played in Trnava.

In Gordon's absence, Allan McGregor and David Marshall kept goal, and it's fair to say that all three have been stalwarts for Scotland.

'The longevity of all three of us has been incredible,' said Gordon. 'It's been an incredible journey and I am happy to have shared that with Allan and David. They're both different characters, and we've all had our ups and downs during our careers, but I'm sure we'll remain friends after we finish playing and catch regularly.'

During Gordon's spell out of the international team, a global pandemic had resulted in restrictions and isolation. The 2020 European Championships was also postponed. But when we returned to some sort of semblance of normality, Scotland did something we hadn't done since 1998; qualified for a major tournament.

The Scots finished third in Group I which meant there was still an opportunity to qualify for Euro 2020 via the play-off path. Scotland were placed in Path C alongside Israel, Norway, and Serbia, and after defeating Israel on penalties at Hampden they did likewise against Serbia in the Final. David Marshall was the hero, saving a penalty for Alexander Mitrovic in the Serbia shoot out.

Craig Gordon was on the bench that historic night, and he would take up a similar position for each of the matches Scotland played at the Euros.

'Although you are disappointed not to play, I had left Celtic to get first team football, so I had a chance to get into the squad,' said Gordon. 'That was my target and I achieved that. It would have been fantastic to get an opportunity to play during the tournament, but David had been fantastic during qualifying. He made a huge contribution to the team, so it was always going to be difficult for me to displace him.'

Gordon, who won the SFWA Player of the Year accolade for a record third time in season 2021/22, soon became Scotland's number one again, winning his 70th cap on 14 June 2022 against Armenia. At the time of writing, only six other players – Kenny Dalglish, Jim Leighton, Darren Fletcher, Alex McLeish, Paul McStay and Tom Boyd - have hit that landmark.

Gordon's current total of Scotland caps stands at 74. Marshall and McGregor have now elected to retire from the international scene, but Gordon, currently some 10 weeks into his rehabilitation as he recovers from the double leg break he sustained on Christmas Eve 2022, isn't contemplating that himself just yet. He said, 'I've still got a long way to go [before he plays again] and I don't know how it will react once I get back out there. But I'm not closing anything off. I'll try my best to get back playing for Hearts, and if the Scotland manager thinks I'm playing well enough to be selected then I'm all for it as I want to play international games.'

Should he reach that goal and play for Scotland again, Gordon will have further opportunities to add to an impressive reel of highlights. But one sticks out more than any other for the 40-year-old.

'My biggest highlight was qualifying for Group A in the Nations League,' said Gordon. 'To finish top of a group that included the Ukraine and get the better of them over two games was a fantastic achievement. Hopefully I get the chance to savour some of the games in Group A. The boys that got us there deserve to be part of that.'

In the meantime, Steve Clarke will have to look elsewhere to find a goalkeeper for Scotland, but Gordon reckons we are in safe hands.
He said, 'There are four names that are being talked about for the next squad, Jon McLaughlin, Liam Kelly, Zander Clark, and Angus Gunn. While Jon maybe hasn't played as much as he would have liked for Rangers, he's a very capable goalkeeper and has experience at international level. Liam has played over 150 games for Motherwell, while I have obviously worked closely with Zander. He has done really well with Hearts and has been getting plaudits for the saves he has made and the performances he has had. Angus is probably a bit of an unknown for the Scotland fans, but although he has been in and out of the Norwich City team this season, he is certainly another option for the manager to consider.'



When debate begins on who is the greatest goalkeeper to have played for Scotland, Craig Gordon will undoubtedly be in the discussion. In his 74 appearances for Scotland, he has kept 32 clean sheets (43.24%). As a comparison, Jim Leighton shut out the opposition 40 times (43.96%), while Andy Goram kept a clean sheet in 16 of the 43 international matches he played (37.21%). In terms of Gordon's contemporaries, Allan McGregor, who won 42 caps, registered 16 shut outs (38.1%), while Davie Marshall has chalked up 11 clean sheets in his 47 appearances for Scotland (23.4%).

Statistics aside, no one can compare with Gordon when it comes to longevity. He currently ranks at the top when it comes to longest-spanning international career for a Scotland player, and the fact he is still being considered by Stevie Clarke when he is fit even though he is now in his forties once again illustrates how important a player he has been for the national team. The Tartan Army will always be grateful for the contribution he has made.

Will we see his likes again? For the sake of the success of Scotland we have to hope so, but for the moment we all wish Craig a speedy recovery from injury and hope to see him add to his colossal haul of caps before he hangs up his gloves for good.





SCOTLAND WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM PINATAR CUP REVIEW

by John Bleasdale



Photo: Sky Sports

SCOTLAND Women took the latest steps in their rebuilding process ahead of the upcoming inaugural Nations League campaign, which runs in conjunction with the Women's Euro 2025 qualifying campaign. Pedro Martinez Losa took his girls to Spain for the Pinatar Cup to face Iceland, Philippines and Wales as part of their preparations for their bid to get back to a major finals after missing out on last summer's European Championship's in England and this summer's World Cup Finals in Australia and New Zealand.

It would turn out to be a mixed bag for Losa's side as they collected four points from the three matches, finishing third in the section. However, Scotland used 24 of their 25 player squad, giving those with fewer caps more international experience that should bode well come the Nations League and Euro qualifiers that start this autumn. Here's how they matches panned out.

Scotland 0-2 Iceland

The score line suggests a comfortable win for the Icelandics, but it was anything but and Scotland were cursing their luck at not being at least two goals in front at half time. Claire Emslie, Sophie Howard, Rachel Corsie and Brogan Hay all passed up good opportunities in the opening period, and the Scots were punished with two quickfire goals in the first six minutes of the second half. Firstly, a deflected effort from Olof Kristindottir wrong footed Lee Gibson to break the deadlock, then a minute later the same player thundered an unstoppable shot into the top corner. Iceland saw out the game comfortably in the end, whilst Scotland were left licking their wounds at not taking their chances in a dominant first half.

Scotland team: Gibson, Brown (Smith 67), Howard, Corsie, Docherty, Kerr, Cuthbert, Hay (Davidson 59), Weir (Murray 59), Emslie (Harrison 58), Hanson (Thomas 59)

Scotland 2-1 Philippines

Despite their opponents being 25 places below them in the FIFA rankings, Scotland were given a tough examination against a Philippines side who are preparing for the World Cup this summer. It took the Scots 39 minutes to break the Philippines resistance when Lauren Davidson cut in off the right flank and hit a left footed shot from the corner of the penalty area, which went into the net via a deflection for her first Scotland goal. They then doubled their lead on 57 minutes when a floating corner from Weir found its way to Corsie around four yards out and the ball went into the net off her thigh. Scotland couldn't add to their lead and were given a late scare when a low free kick from Abrahamsen in the 90th minute gave Phillipines a lifeline, but it was too little too late as Scotland claimed the three points.

Scotland Team: Fife, Smith, K Clark (Corsie 45), J Clark, Mukandi, Grimshaw (Napier 83), Kerr (Arthur 73), Murray (Weir 45), Evans (Hanson 45), Davidson, Thomas (Harrison 72)

Scotland 1-1 Wales

Knowing that Iceland were likely to beat Phillipines (which they duly did), both sides were playing for second place in the table. Scotland started the stronger and took the lead on eight minutes when Erin Cuthbert's corner was brilliantly headed home at the back post by Sophie Howard. Despite controlling most of the half, Scotland couldn't add to their advantage and were punished three minutes from half time when Jess Fishlock's pass caught Fiona Brown wrong side and Ceri Holland remained composed to slot past the advancing Gibson. The Scots had an early chance in the second half when Abi Harrison's near post flick narrowly went wide, but chances were at a premium as the game petered out to a 1-1 draw, meaning Scotland finished in third place one point behind their Welsh counterparts.

Scotland Team: Gibson, Brown (Smith 45), Howard, Corsie, Docherty, Kerr (Arthur 78), Cuthbert, Davidson (Hay 63), Weir, Emslie (Hanson 63), Harrison (Thomas 63).

Fun facts

Claire Emslie won her 50th cap in the draw with Wales.

Congratulations to Claire on entering the SFA Roll of Honour.

Sam Kerr was the only player to start all three matches.

Jamie-Lee Napier made her Scotland debut, coming on as a substitute against Phillipines.







"Scottish Football needs to open the door and let progress in."

Henry McLeish March 2021

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SUZANNE WINTERS INTERVIEW

By John Bleasdale

SCOTLAND Women's National Team has come a long way in recent years. From not being recognised by our own governing body to reaching consecutive international tournaments in 2017 and 2019, with the likes of Caroline Weir, Erin Cuthbert and Rachel Corsie becoming household names alongside their male counterparts.


Photo: Sky Sports

It can be argued that the current crop benefiting from the increased exposure in the Scotland Women's National Team have a lot to thank the previous squad, containing record goalscorer Julie Fleeting amongst others, for where they are today. The squads managed by Vera Pauw and Anna Signeul were key in raising standards for others to follow, and who came within touching distance themselves for qualification for a World Cup and European Championships that gave belief to the next generation.

One of those players from that group was Suzanne Grant, now Suzanne Winters following her marriage to former male footballer David Winters. The 105 times capped forward took time to share her memories with the magazine, and how times changed throughout the twelve and a half years she represented her country.
She made her debut on 29 November 2000 at the age of just 16 against Northern Ireland in a match played at the David Keswick Atheltic Centre, Dumfries, a far cry from the modern day side who get the prestige of playing at Hampden. What was unique about Winters' international bow was that she hadn't been registered for a club side at this point, which said a lot about the talent she had at that time, and justified her selection by netting a double. "I remember it like it was yesterday" she said, " I remember feeling so nervous and questioning why I was starting and get the chance as I was just grateful to have the experience of training and being part of the A squad. I played right midfield and I just thought to myself enjoy the experience and scoring the 2 goals was definitely the best feeling and all the girls celebrating with me that I looked up to it was so special."



Making her debut at a rundown athletics stadium wasn't the only example of second-class facilities and treatment the Women's team had to contend with in those days. It was also not uncommon for them to wear strips handed down from the men's senior and Under 21 sides, where they were often a couple of sizes too large for them. However Winters and co didn't complain as the honour of representing their country trumped any grievances they might've had. She said: "To be honest, I never seen it at that time as any pitch was bad as it was a stadium and growing up playing in a local park it felt great so any stadium to me or pitch was an honour at that time and like the strips just pulling on that Scotland jersey even if it was about 10 sizes too big it was the best feeling as a young girl getting to experience playing for your country at 16 and then progressing to play for over 100 caps."

The first four years of Winters International career saw the Scots managed by Vera Pauw before her departure in 2004, where she was replaced by Anna Signeul who would remain in charge until 2017. Between them, they radicalised the Women's team to help create a more professional environment, including raising the standards to install belief into the players.

They had a talented pool of players who went onto win a high number of caps, including Gemma Fay, Shelley Kerr, Pauline Hamill, Emma Black, Leanne Ross, Stacey Cook (aka Staco) and record goalscorer Julie Fleeting. The girls all formed a terrific team spirit that remains in place to this day, as Winters explains. "It was the best group and I really do believe to this day the memories wouldn't have been the same without all those girls and the rest that I was privileged to play along side and travel all over with. We had some funny times from doing pranks on each other (usually Staco doing them on everyone). Staco was the joker she always made the trip so fun. We used to make funny videos (staff video), the girls will laugh when they see that printed, and a few other things that can't be printed lol. Still to this day we all get together and share all the memories we defo had the best group and so happy to this day they are still my best friends."

That spirit would take Scotland to the brink of qualification for three consecutive international tournaments, only to miss out narrowly on each occasion. In the Euro 2009 qualifying campaign, the Scots reached the playoffs but lost on away goals to Russia after a 4-4 aggregate, with the 3-2 defeat on home turf proving to be the knockout blow.

Performances continued to improve during the 2011 World Cup qualifiers as Scotland won six of their eight group matches. Winters chipped in with four goals, including a double in their 3-1 win over Georgia at Tynecastle, one a neat side-footed finish and the other a free header to seal victory. When asked if this was one of her best performances in the dark blue, Winters replied: "Yeah, I think it was one of my best performances. I really enjoyed that game we got a lot of the ball and we created chances and I was so grateful to have got two goals that game and being a World Cup qualifier it made them extra special to me."

During this campaign, Winters reached the milestone of 75 caps in the home qualifier against Bulgaria at Falkirk Stadium, and marked the occasion with a goal in a thumping 8-1 win. Recalling that landmark game for her, Winters said: "I remember most games I played for my country especially the ones I scored in and being my 75th cap it again was an extra proud moment for me even knowing I reached 75 caps pinching myself to have that opportunity and scoring in the game too it was great."

Despite Winters contribution, Scotland finished second in their group behind Denmark by one point, meaning the Danes advanced to the finals in Germany. The next campaign was to be even more heartbreaking for Scotland as they faced Spain in the playoffs for the Euro 2013 finals. With seconds remaining of the second leg in Madrid, and with Scotland leading on away goals, the hosts netted a 122nd minute winner to advance to the finals 4-3 on aggregate.



It proved to be Suzanne Winters last chance of reaching an international tournament as her career began to wind down. She did, however, reach the landmark of 100 caps, one of currently 14 women to do so, and marked the occasion with a consolation goal in a 3-1 defeat to USA in Nashville, the last of her 13 goals for her country. For the girl from Grantown-On-Spey, it was a special moment. "That game was surreal for me" she said, "I remember pulling up to the stadium and the crowd was incredible and walking out onto the pitch to warm up and the number of fans and the atmosphere I think there was about 15,000 fans something we weren't use to at the time. Then to score against the world champions in the 80th minute was special being from a small town as a wee girl to have a dream to play football on a big stage against the best in the world to score and on my 100th cap was a dream come true for me."

She earned the last of her 105 caps on 7 April 2013 in a 2-1 win over Wales at East End Park. She fell pregnant that year with the first of her two sons being born later that year. These days, she can be seen regularly on Sky Sports News giving live updates on Scotland Women's National Team qualifying matches. It's the ideal job for Winters as she gets to see the development of the current squad and show her passion for the team as a fan as much as a pundit, and it's a role she relishes.

"I absolutely love it" she said of her position at Sky, "and I'm so grateful to get the opportunity to still be involved in the game and commentating for me was something new and out my comfort zone. I am so





happy they believed in me and I love it. I think if you see me doing it you see the passion I still have for the game and for the girls that still play. I can never hide that on tv!"

Suzanne Winters' generation may not have got to a major international finals, but she can feel proud at seeing the younger group coming through at the time taking on that baton and taking the Scotland Women's National Team into chartered territory. The likes of Leanne Crichton, Caroline Weir, Kim Little, Emma Mitchell, Rachel Corsie and co took inspiration from their predecessors and broke through that barrier into the 2017 European Championships and 2019 World Cup finals.

Winters could be forgiven at feeling a little envious at the achievements of her successors, but that is far from the case and is equally as delighted for them as any Scotland fan at seeing them at consecutive major finals. She said: "Yeah it was great for those girls. I still feel every emotion with them watching the games and now working with Sky on the games, especially those girls who have been there from the start and felt the feeling of not qualify and being so close, so it was amazing to see them do it and do it for our country was so proud of them all."

John Bleasdale





CRAIG BROWN

Ex Scotland boss Craig Brown, amongst his many feats in football, famously led Scotland to the Euro and World Cup finals.

Read his column in each issue of 'Famous Tartan Army Magazine'.


Photo: Lawrie Anne Brown



SCOTLAND in the FIFA WORLD CUP FINALS

With the disappointment of not going to Qatar recently following the home defeat by Ukraine it's pleasant to recall happier times when the Scotland National Team did manage to participate in the world's most prestigious football tournament.

I'm particularly fortunate in that in a 12 year period from 1986 to 1998 I was on the staff with the international squad at 5 major tournaments – 2 European Championships (Sweden '92 and England '96) and no fewer than 3 FIFA World Cup finals (Mexico '86, Italy '90 and France '98), missing out only on the World Cup in '94 when we failed to qualify with only 11 points from 10 games from a group containing Italy, Portugal, Malta, Estonia, Switzerland. Italy and Switzerland progressed to the USA with 16 and 15 points respectively.

When Any Roxburgh resigned I was asked to take at least temporary control. An away game against Italy was hardly the ideal choice for my first game in charge of the Scotland team. With the home team requiring a win to guarantee a place in the finals the crowd of 61,178 in the Olympic Stadium, Rome, provided tremendous support as Donadoni, Casiraghi and Eranio scored in the 3-1 win with Kevin Gallacher getting a fine goal for Scotland.

A significant statistic bedevilled each of the three times I was privileged to travel with Scotland to the FIFA World Cup finals. On each occasion we had to compete without, arguably, our best player.

For the finals in Mexico, with Sir Alex Ferguson in charge, our talisman, Kenny Dalglish, was unfit and unable to join the squad. With Kenny in the team I'm sure we would not have failed to beat a 10 man Uruguay in our final group match. Jose Batista was ordered off in the first minute for a shocking foul on Gordon Strachan, which left the 'robust' Uruguay outfit seriously depleted for the entire match. But still, in spite of considerable pressure, we couldn't get the elusive goal that would have won the match.

Unluckily Andy Roxburgh, in Italia '90, had to do without two players who were running riot in the Scottish Premier League – Davie Cooper and John Robertson. Both admitted they were not likely to be fit enough to travel with the squad. To his credit, an injured Richard Gough, declared himself ok when there was doubt about a foot injury, but he lasted only half of the opening game against Cost Rica. So, with justification, he could be counted among those who couldn't be considered, at least for 70% of the three group matches.

The sad tale continued when I was manager in France '98. Our most influential playmaker was injured in a Premier League game for Coventry City, so reluctantly; we had to do without Gary McAllister. Then, in the second group game, Tottenham's stalwart defender, Colin Calderwood had to be replaced by David Weir in 59 minutes because of a shoulder/arm injury.

The untimely death of the great Jock Stein, whose Celtic team had been the first British winner of the European Cup and who had led Scotland to a World Cup play-off against Australia, prompted the SFA to appoint the then Aberdeen manager, Alex Ferguson, to take charge of Scotland for the vital play-off matches, and, if successful, the tournament in Mexico. I was honoured, possibly my greatest football honour, when the best manager on the planet called me and

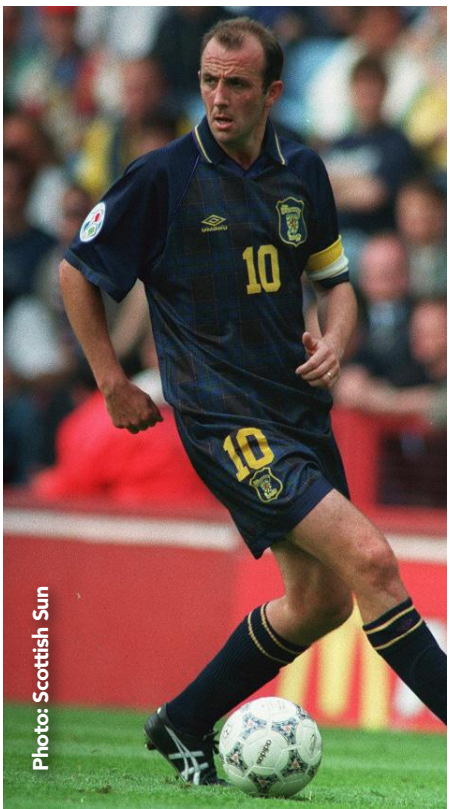

Photo: Scottish Sun



Photo: Scottish Sun

asked, "Broon, how would you like the holiday of a lifetime? I've accepted the job of filling in till Scotland find a full-time replacement for the late Jock Stein. I'm in the process of arranging my coaching staff and would like you to join Walter Smith and Archie Knox. We have three games to play but we'll not let that interfere with our enjoyment!"

It certainly was a tremendous experience and excellent preparation for what was to follow in international management. Eight days of training in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with the same 7530 ft. altitude as was to be encountered in Mexico, was an education. A visit to sea level to play club side, Los Angeles Heat, before returning to altitude, this time in Mexico, was the medical prescription to cope with playing at great height.

One thing which was worth learning was that the senior squad of 22 players at that time, 23 now, should be augmented to facilitate a full- scale practice match as more bodies were required. Why? Because of the inevitable injury or illness to main players. On future occasions we took 6 young youth international players to undertake menial tasks such as dressing room and flight tidying, to set up training field arrangements and to flesh out the sessions. Small-sided competition matches, head tennis competitions etc. were definitely enhanced by the presence of the talented youngsters.

Based on the experience gained under the guidance of Sir AF, Andy Roxburgh conducted an impressive campaign in Italy '90. His resourcefulness enabled us to take an outsize squad to Italy for a weekend to visit the Stadium in Genoa where we were to play our group matches. A month before the tournament started an enlarged Scotland squad went to see the local derby, Genoa v Sampdoria. This prepared the team for the atmosphere to be expected during the World Cup matches.

Andy's initiative also had staff members meet once a week for several weeks before going to the World Cup to receive Italian lessons from a teacher from a nearby school, Holyrood Secondary. This gave us a basic facility in the local language for use in our hotel in Rapallo and elsewhere during our stay in Italy.

The results in Italy were very tight, a 1-0 defeat against Costa Rica, a 2-1 victory over Sweden and an unfortunate 1-0 loss against Brazil. Glorious failure I'm afraid!

Onward now to our most recent appearance in the World Cup…France '98, and sadly that's almost 25 years ago! Having acquitted ourselves reasonably well in Euro '96 and having again qualified, as we did for the Euro Championship, by losing only 3 goals in 10 games, there was justifiable optimism even although we had to play the opening game of the World Cup against the Champions, Brazil. There is no need to emphasise the hype surrounding this fixture, nor the scramble for match tickets.

The players were uniformly and immaculately attired in sponsored kilt outfits. Their relaxed, relatively confident mood was enhanced by the fun introduced in training sessions. First of all in the preparation camp in New Jersey in the USA, and continued at our French base in Saint-Remy-de-Provence, where we took over the entire hotel, and added sponsored gym equipment. Each training session was concluded by a light-hearted match with various criteria used for team selection – Anglos v Home Scots, Old Firm v the others, tall v small, married v single, defenders v forwards, lost driving licence v full licence, good looking v ugly, most caps v others, etc. etc.

Our three games provided contrasting emotion and disappointing results. It's fair to say that we possibly deserved more than a 1-2 defeat against the world champions, Brazil. To lose by an own goal was harsh on Tom Boyd in particular and the team as a whole.

The second game, a 1-1 draw with Norway was competently handled by a Scotland team, which deserved victory. Having been left with the final group match against the African Champions, Morocco, there was a justifiable degree of optimism. The official FIFA Technical Study Report confirm that was not unrealistic as, even with Craig Burley being ordered off in 54 min, we had more of everything than Morocco. More possession, more possession in the final third, more shots, more shots on target, more corners, fewer fouls conceded, a man short for more than half an hour. Admittedly the 3 – 0 score line looks like a drubbing but it in no way reflects the match action! To be fair the insightful journalists acknowledged that, but we were out of the big event I admit in a rather tame fashion.

The last criterion was one I used when presented with the most difficult task while working for more than a decade with the national team. Our travel agent, Maurice Brannon, told me at Gatwick that the aircraft to the U S was full and there were seats in Business Class for only half of the players. It therefore was essential to split the squad. I gave that task to the captain and vice captain! Names in the hat became a distinct possibility. However, Colin Hendry and Gary McAllister said they had a great discussion and it was agreed that those with most caps would be in the Business Class. Some A4 sized colour photographs of the team, headed "Best Wishes from the Scotland International Team": were provided to each player to sign and give away to autograph hunters. One was sent up to me in the Business Class with the front message augmented by the words half of written after from and a message on the back saying,

Dear Coach,
Sorry but our tired, squashed bodies won't be fit enough to play in the World Cup.
Signed. The Foot Soldiers!

The first fun practice match was one of the most competitive ever – Business Class v Economy! Imagine the fun/ aggro, which existed!

That "good looking v ugly" training team selection decision came back to haunt me. Imagine my surprise after our participation in the World Cup was over, when going to collect my car at Glasgow Airport, a lady approached me and angrily asked, "Why was my husband in the ugly team"? She had a case because that player was one of the better-looking guys. I had to smile and admit that that was another of my several alleged selection errors!

Craig Brown


Scotland (SCO) 0:3 (0:1) Morocco (MOR)

Goal Scorers
Goal Scorers
22' BASSIR Salaheddine 0:1
46' HADDA Abdeljlil 0:2
85' BASSIR Salaheddine 0:3

Players
1 LEIGHTON Jim
2 MC NAMARA Jackie
6 MC KINLAY Tosh 54')
3 BOYD Tommy
5 HENDRY Colin
16 WEIR David
8 BURLEY Craig
11 COLLINS John
14 LAMBERT Paul
22 DAILLY Christian
7 GALLACHER Kevin
9 DURIE Gordon
(20 BOOTH Scott 83')

Players
12 BENZEKRI Dr ss
2 SABER Abdellah
(4 ROSSI Youssef 72')
6 NAYBET Nourddine
15 ABRAMI Lahcen
5 TRIKI Smahi
7 HADJILEI Moustafa
17 AMZINE Gharib
(18 AZZOUZI Rachid 76')
18 CHIPPO Youssef
(19 SELLAMI Jamal 87')
20 EL KHALEJ Tahar
9 HADDA Abdellilil
14 BASSIR Salaheddine

Yellow Cards
21' GALLACHER Kevin
Red Cards
53' BURLEY Craig

Yellow Cards
81' CHIPPO Youssef
Red Cards

Referees
Referee BUJSAIM Ali Mohamed (UAE)
Assistants TORRES ZUNIGA Luis F. (CRC), FRED Lencio (VAN)

Match Related Content
Photos
Quotes
Match Progress
Other Related Content

Match Facts
Date 23.06.98 / 21:00
Match N° 34 / Group A
Status Official
Venue Saint-Etienne Geoffroy-Guichard
Att 30600

Match Stats

6	Corners	1
3	Offsides	4
22	Shots	14
9	SOG	5
1	Yellows	1
1	Reds	0
13	Fouls	18

Player Stats

Time of Possession

AZ	Tot		AZ	Tot
7' 11"	13' 54"	1st	9' 12"	14' 40"
8' 04"	14' 22"	2nd	3' 24"	13' 21"
15' 15"	28' 16"	Total	12' 35"	28' 01"

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION

BY CEO Stuart Murphy



As we approach the start of 2023, I'm grateful to be able to update everyone on everything that's been happening here at the SFSA.

As CEO I've been in post now for around 18 months, I'm very proud and privileged, to lead the largest Independent Fan's organization in Scotland with almost 80,000 members. This is an amazing statistic but one that clearly shows the real appetite that exists for a body to represent everyone across Scottish football from the Grassroots game all the way up to the SPFL.

There have been numerous and notable successes over that 18-month period of time of which me and the Board are extremely proud, but none of this would have been possible without the backing of that membership. Working closely with the SFA, SFPL and the Scottish Government we have been able to share details of our various campaigns, surveys and issues providing priceless customer insight into the views and needs of the ordinary fan. One amazing example is when we teamed up with the British Heart Foundation to launch a campaign to increase the number of defibrillators at clubs in an attempt to save more lives from cardiac arrests. Through working with the Scottish Government and our Sports minister Ms Maree Todd, we were able to secure an additional £250 grant for Clubs.

We know exactly what these ordinary football supporters feel about the game whether it is the big issues like league reconstruction or the impact of Covid on the game, we ask the questions. This has allowed the organization to further strengthen its reputation as a committed and reliable body for fans, who are fighting for their voices to be heard.

Our commitment to this aim is absolute, and through the work of the last year, the organization has become more effective than ever. We are currently revising our organisational structure at board level to ensure we are fully representative of our membership base and by the start of 2023 that new structure will be embedded.

The SFSA has also developed a growing team of young volunteers known as the "Engine Room" who have significantly helped the organization to become more effective as a representative body for fans. The SFSA is proud to offer opportunities to develop students and recent graduates, helping the next generation gain important industry experience whilst being mentored by senior directors who oversee the projects they work on.

Our website hosts all the SFSA content and projects to date where you can find information about the SFSA, our recent activity, our current partners, and our content all in one place. You can find the link to our website here: Home - Scottish Football Supporters Association - SFSA (scottishfsa.org)

Membership of the SFSA is completely free for individuals and groups and always will be. We can be your voice and represent you on issues that affect you.
Today I invite you to join and help amplify that voice. These are tough times indeed, but together we can be a force for good whether you are an individual or a Group, we would love to have you on Board.

Thanks
Stuart

HOME FOUND FOR SFSA TARTAN ARMY AWARD

We are pleased to announce we have found a fitting recipient to receive the SFSA award to the tartan army for their fantastic away support in the year they travelled in their thousands to Wembley, Moldova and the Faroe Islands.

Stewart Mackinlay was nominated to receive the fan award by his fellow footsoldier Graeme Shinnie. And with the help of Edinburgh Tartan Army chairman Martin Riddell, Iain Emerson from the magazine was allowed to gate crash their annual AGM to surprise Stuart with the award.

Graeme had told us that Armenia was Stewart's 100th Scotland away game, part of a run of 81 consecutive away games where fans were officially allowed to attend. An incredible achievement given some of the barren years of success and tournament football we have had to endure as fans.

Stewart even made it to the behind closed doors game in Olomouc against the Czech Republic, watching the game from a lassies flat, whose door he'd knocked on not long before kick off. Extraordinary commitment!

Aside from this, Stewart does a brilliant job monitoring social media channels of foreign media, and opposition associations to get clues as to whom Scotland might be playing in friendlies or in what venue in any particular country. Most Scotland fans on Twitter will have seen tweets from @scotlandstewart with all his helpful information.

Well done Stewart, a well deserved custodian of this wonderful Caithness Glass Award.


Stewart receives his award and Edinburgh Tartan Army members Dave Harley, Martin Riddell, Mel Forrest and Neil McDonald.


Stewart on international duty

The SFSA Award winners for 2022 were



Men's Player of the Year
John McGinn

Women's Player of year
Erin Cuthbert

Manager of the year
Ange Postecoglou

Lifetime Achievement Award
Rose Reilly

Worldwide Scot Award (a new category)
Caroline Weir

Fan of the year
Sandy Fyfe

Special Fans Awards
Fans Supporting Foodbanks & Hibs Dnipro Kids charity



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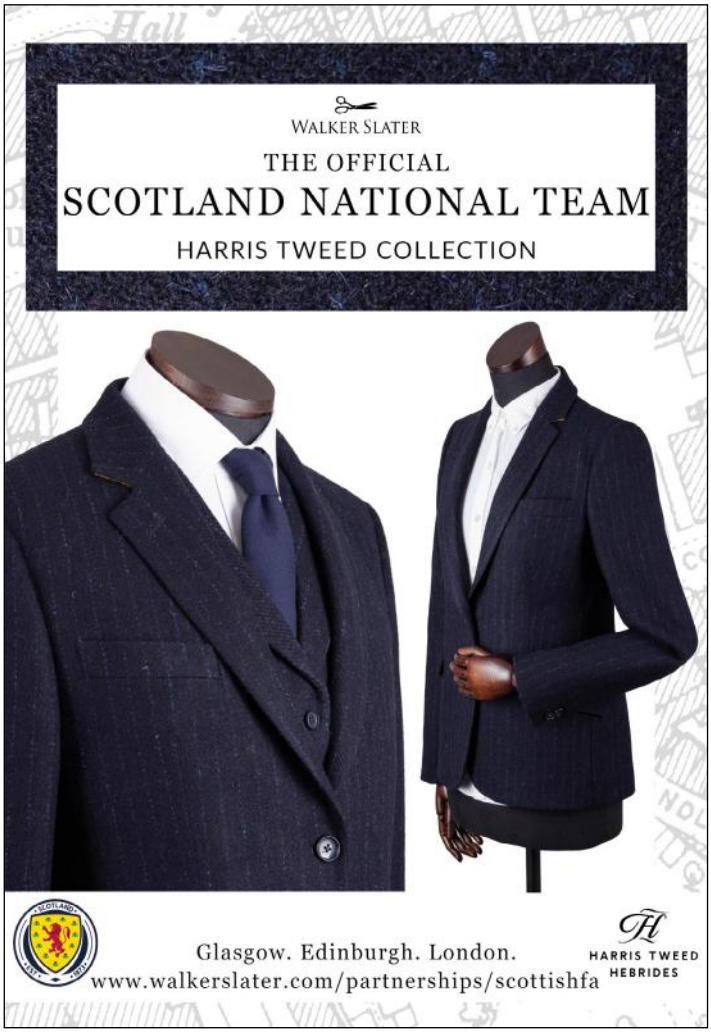
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C'mon Scotland!!!

FAMOUS TARTAN ARMY MAGAZINE

Onwards answering









THE CHICK YOUNG COLUMN

Nearly quarter of a century after he died the darling of the Tartan Army is still causing chaos.

James Curran Baxter, a maverick in darkest blue, was Scotland's king of Wembley. He ripped the English, not once but twice.

As if it wasn't enough to go there in 1963, watch your club teammate and captain in those pre substitute days stretchered off with a broken leg, and assume command of the proceedings.

He patted his Rangers pal - the great Eric Caldow - as he lay on the stretcher and then did a fair impression of Clark Kent going into a phone box.

He had never taken a penalty before but his brimming self confidence that day allowed him to take one and score.

Any other outcome would never have entered his mind. He scored the other goal too and the collective saw England's sole effort off the premises.

Enough for one lifetime you would think, but four years later Slim Jim was back. If 63 was his coronation, 67 was his jubilee.

In my lifetime England 2 Scotland 3 was the finest 90 minutes I've seen. Seemingly they were world champions- although they hardly ever mention it - but we soared to a height that conquered the earth, the moon and the stars.

And Baxter, keepy uppy and all, gave a celestial performance.

And so the jersey he wore that day became football's Stone of Destiny, Scotland's Holy Grail.



Photo: PA Press Association
Faddy's Parisian white knight outfit!

I knew Jim well. So well I was appointed chairman of his testimonial committee.

He could be a bugger at times and that eternal glint in his eye could derail you the way the swivelling hips once did.

But for his celebration testimonial dinner, which I hosted, he gave me the jersey, which in turn I auctioned and sold to two Glasgow car dealers for £17,500.
This, remember, was 1991 and curiously the sum was to a penny what Raith Rovers had received from Rangers for his transfer.

It was an auction for big hitters. David Murray jumped ship at £17.000.

Now in a kind of "I'm Spartacus, no I'm Spartacus " sort of way another couple of jerseys have popped up with their owners claiming theirs are the real deal.

Jimmy hoodwink the public? Aye all right, he could have given lessons to Arthur Daley and Del Boy.

When Jim came out to play the foxes headed for the woods.

I suspect he might have been capable, but I have reason to believe that he told me the truth.

He offered his last two Scotland caps to auction too but I insisted he kept them for his two sons. Them apart the Wembley jersey was the last of his memorabilia.

But that's not the point.

It's 56 years since that glorious afternoon. In half a century from now - maybe Faddy's Parisian white knight outfit notwithstanding- will anyone care about a strip so iconic?

Give us a legend, Scotland, an icon to worship not just applaud and cheer.

Law, Jordan, Dalglish, Johnstone, St John.

And Jimmy Baxter.

There are no heroes any more.

Chick Young

McTears auctioneers pulled their auction of Jim Baxter's 1967 shirt due to concerns over its authenticity.



Jim Baxter and Billy Bremner



David Wishart with Slim Jim and his shirt, which he bought in auction for £17,500, and hosted by Chick Young.


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ASSOCIATION OF TARTAN ARMY CLUBS

BY PAUL McLEAN

Doonhamers take hame the Sevens
The 2022 ATAC Sevens, hosted by the Falkirk and District Tartan Army, was played on Sunday 28th August. It was a brilliant event with 9 teams entered: DTA, ETA, FDTA, KTA, NETA, WESTA, WEBATA and 2 teams from the Doonhamers TA.

All teams played against every other team once playing 8 x 10 minute games. The winners being the team that topped the section. In the end there was a final as the last round of games featured Doonhamers 1 who had won 6 and drawn 1 of their previous games and Doonhamers 2 who had won all 7 matches. It was Doonhamers 2 who completed the perfect record to win the competition, the first time it had been played since 2019. Well done to the Doonhamers making their debut in the competition and a welcome addition to ATAC.





Walking Football
There was also a walking football competition for the first time, with 4 clubs sending a team. Again all teams played the others once but this time there was a final and a 3rd/4th place match. Hosts FDTA who had finished 2nd in the group reversed the result of the group match to beat WEBATA in the final and win the first ATAC walking football competition. ETA beat WESTA on penalties for 3rd place. An excellent addition to the sevens and one we are likely to see again next time.
FDTA walking football team

It was brilliant to have the Sevens back and ATAC would like to thank FDTA and Neil Callaghan in particular for a fantastic well run event. The after party in the Graeme Hotel was even better with outstanding hospitality from our hosts. Well done to all teams for travelling, it was great to see so many having a good day out. Special well done to the drivers of the Doonhamers and NETA buses for staying the distance, hopefully we will see you all again next year in Dumfries.

Cheers
Paul McLean (FDTA walking football captain/manager)












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ELSIE COOK

Elsie was joint founder and honorary secretary of Scottish Women's Football Association in 1972. She went on to manage the Scotland Women's Team in 1974.

Elsie writes here for Famous Tartan Army Magazine in her own unique Ayrshire way….



JOCK STEIN, CELTIC PARK
Wed 18th September 1974

It was 1974 and the SFA had about turned and agreed on official recognition for the women's teams, I was the manager, and our first International against Italy in Pescara, Ravenna, was just about to happen in a few days time.

Passports organised for Italy, players at the ready, we could not believe our luck.

THEN! Wid ye believe it? I was visitin' my mother! Her telephone rang...she picked it up, "Stewarton 2636" ….she says in her poshest voice! She was makin' some weird faces and, coverin' the phone, ma mither whispered, "Elsie, it's for you!" "It's Jock Stein!" "Jock Stein mum?!" Says I laughin'… she must be haverin'... "Whit?" "Jock Stein!" she emphasises. "Don't be daft mum!" My mother handed me the phone wae a 'Cannae believe it' grin...."Hello" I tentatively answer. Jist imagine it...I was blown away, I also covered the phone wae ma shaky hand, silently mouthed back, eyes agog, tae mum, "It IS Jock Stein!!"

It was none other than the great man himself, the one and only, Jock Stein! The Celtic Manager! Manager of the most successful Scottish team ever, the LISBON LIONS! Winners! Legends of the European Cup '67, I remember, we dogged work that day tae watch that amazin' team and their brilliant manager, lift the biggest cup in fitba! Dae ye get it?

Here he was, Jock Stein, invitin' me, askin' me, if I could bring the Scotland team and a Scotland Select X1, to put on a half hour demonstration match prior to the Celtic v Olympiakos, European Cup tie, First Round, 1st Leg...on Wednesday 18th September, at Celtic Park! Oh! My! God! I was fair flummoxed! I was shakin' fae heid tae fit! Jeez! Imagine, a personal invitation, a call fae a footballin' God! JOCK STEIN!! Whew!! I'll never forget that moment, that stern, gruff voice saying ma name, "Elsie! Jock Stein here!" then a pause and the question!

This was a most memorable highlight in my life that I will never forget,
an invitation by jock stein to play an exhibition match at parkhead!
Another milestone passed!

I immediately set to, there and then, gettin' in touch wae aw the International squad players who were due to fly out to Italy the followin' week. Clubs were asked to put forward, at short notice, their top players, to make up the select side!

Whit a surprise..whit an honour! The day after SFA lifted the ban on women here's whit happened next…This was a most memorable highlight in my life that I will never forget! Edna Nellis could twist and turn defenders inside oot and go back and dae it again jist for sheer devilment! I once heard a commentator say of a top professional player, "He could play in a telephone box!" That was Edna! Edna Neillis..Small in stature! Her skinny wee white legs and clever feet and that mop of ginger hair! Her readin' of the gemme and her timin', her weight of a perfect pass, left us all in awe, to be admired! Her fitba hero, none other than Ranger's, Colin Stein!!

When a defender, or midfielder put in a fierce tackle..the Celtic fans booed them loudly! The lassies loved it!! Lapped it up! The players of both sides pit oan a crackin' show of attractive attackin' football! I was so proud of them! Every player had pulled the stops out to prove their worth as footballers to a knowledgable and appreciative crowd!

When I asked players for their memories of that night, I'm quotin' Scotland Captain, Margaret McAulay, here! Margaret, another Rangers fan, like Edna, talks of Edna Neillis's delirium when she scored. Margaret's memory, quote: "she said to me before we went on the park, if she scored she would not celebrate!" Well, of course Edna scored a cracker and she was off like a rocket, aw roon the pitch, no one could catch her! Arms akimbo! Like an aeroplane!! So much for no celebratin'! That sums up Edna! As for Margaret herself, she remembers runnin' doon the wing tae the bye line, playin' a dummy back heeler sendin' her opponent the wrang way and gettin' a huge roar fae the Jungle! Jock Stein…in the tunnel, side by side, baith o' us grinning fae lug tae lug.. his huge imposing presence beside me, the wee wummin fae Stewarton…I felt the weight of the 'big man', it was more than a physical presence - I felt the strength of his character and at the same time there was an honesty, a gentleness - he made me feel 'safe'! If he'd asked me there and then tae dae 100 laps o' the pitch I'd've obliged! That is a measure of Jock Stein, the man!

This was a great advert for the women's game and with the Parkhead cheers ringin' in their ears, the incredible Jock Stein beside me, the players trooped happily off the pitch, to be met by a smilin' Jock who applauded them heartily! With one hand on the player's shoulder, he shook each lassie by the hand, thankin' them for puttin' on a great show!

Now he did not need to make that gesture, goodness me in half an hour his team were due to play a European Cup Tie and here he was laudin' wee Edna, oor wee 'Jinky' and every player, for their skills! I was in awe of the greatness of the man, he inspired me by his strength of character jist by standing beside me, I felt safe! The stature of the man, I will never forget that!

What a night it was and we were due to fly out to Italy the followin' day to play our first International against Italy in Pescara, Ravenna, in four days time, on the 22nd!! It was aw go!






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BOOK LAUNCH – A NATION AGAIN

The Inside Story of Scotland's Journey to the European Championship

WHEN David Marshall flung himself to his left hand side and stopped Alexsander Mitrovic's decisive spot kick in Belgrade, it sparked mass hysteria amongst many a living room up and down the country as the Scotland's Men's National Team ended a 23 year wait to qualify for a major international tournament.

Marshall's heroics also prompted Hampden Roar Podcast host and freelance BBC Scotland commentator Andy Bargh to fulfil an ambition of his by writing the story behind the long awaited journey to a major finals. Those ambitions were realised this year as the book detailing the journey to Euro 2020, A Nation Again, was officially launched on 19 February, joining an elite list of Pitch Publishing titles that includes We Made Them Angry, Arrival and Scotland's Swedish Adventure.

The launch night of A Nation Again took place at Sloans bar, Glasgow that night, which Andy's good friend and former SFA Head of Communications, Lewis Irons, hosted. The event also featured a star-studded panel of goalkeeping hero Marshall, right back Stephen O'Donnell and Sky Sports reporter Luke Shanley, one of just five Scottish journalists who was lucky enough to be in Belgrade.

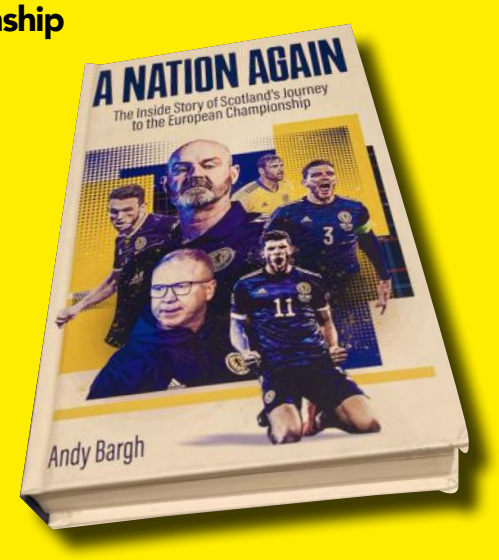
In the theme of the book, they all recalled the journey Scotland embarked on from the aftermath of Gordon Strachan leaving in the wake of a failed bid to reach the 2018 World Cup Finals through to the night our long wait for qualification to a first finals since 1998 came to an end. A packed audience were entertained as the guys shared their memories whilst video highlights were played on a big screen behind them, with O'Donnell in particular proving to de a hit with his self-deprecating humour. A short Q&A session was held at the end to allow members of the audience to ask their questions to the panel.

For Andy, the night couldn't have gone any better with a combination of a great panel and sales of A Nation Again at the event, which put any natural pre-event nerves at rest. "Remarkably, I don't think anything, noticeably, went wrong," he said. "The technology didn't let us down, the players turned up in one piece. I was worried on the Saturday and Sunday "are one of these guys going to get injured, are they going to forget that they double-booked themselves at an in laws birthday, dinner" or something like that? But they turned up, and when I knew the technology was working, I was totally relaxed, and as soon as the evening started, I knew that Lewis would carry the whole thing with his eyes shut, so I was completely at ease with Lewis leading it. Luke Shanley's got nothing to worry about as far as speaking to a crowd or camera goes, and the players – I think SOD (O 'Donnell) is more charming and on the front foot than Marshall. That's not disparaging towards Marshall, he's more reserved, but SOD he's very humorous, self-deprecated. He recognises what his place has been in his Scotland journey."

O'Donnell's tales certainly won a few admirers, with suggestions that a career in the after-dinner speaking circuit awaiting him once he hangs up his boots. However, the moment that got the biggest cheer of the night was when the most famous penalty save in Scottish Football history (even bigger than Andreas Kopke saving from Gareth Southgate at Euro '96) was played on the big screen above the panel. It was also Andy's favourite moment, as he explains. "He was in the middle of talking about something that happened in the playoff final, then on the big screen, where I was playing highlights from the qualification journey, it came to Marshall's save. He then said "I'm just going to watch this a second," and everyone just kind of shut up and watched Marshall save Mitrovic's penalty, and then everyone burst out with a round of applause, which was nice."

After more than an hour of Lewis Irons, Andy Bargh, David Marshall, Stephen O'Donnell and Luke Shanley chew the fat over Scotland's long journey to the delayed Euro 2020 Finals, punters queued up to buy at least one copy of the book and get it signed by the players, who were happy to pose for photographs and chat to fans. It also gave everyone in the audience time to reflect on a great night well put together by everyone involved.

As for the book itself, it promises to be an intriguing read. From the debacle of finding a replacement to Strachan, via the ups and downs of Alex McLeish's second spell that included the crucial guarantee of the Nations League playoff, through to the glory of overcoming Serbia, it is sure to be a fascinating insight into a complex journey that took Scotland out of the international wilderness from those who witnessed at first hand.



Andy Bargh has spent many nights over the past two years on A Nation Again, and can now look back with pride that he has accomplished an ambition of his to write about the latest qualification journey of the Scotland Men's National Team. By god we've waited long enough for it!

Andy was speaking on the Scottish Football Forums podcast to John Bleasdale, Krys Kujawa and Scott Johnston










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Tartan Army Children's Charity (TACC)

Registered Scottish Charity SCO38330

Christmas Donations

TACC were delighted to announce that they donated over £10,000 in total for their 2022 Christmas donations. The majority of the money went to three organisations supporting disadvantaged children in Scotland - Includem (across Scotland), The Cottage Family Centre (Kirkcaldy) and Blameless (Hamilton). TACC also made three smaller donations.

Here's how the donations helped these great causes.

Includes works with disadvantaged children and their families to help them transform their lives. The donation was used, in conjunction with some other funding, to offer a Christmas treat for 400 children, taking the form of toys, board games, clothes, food hampers and a Christmas experience to a pantomime.

The Cottage Family Centre supports children aged 0-16 years and their families. The donation helping to provide a Christmas hamper, toys & clothing.

Blameless supports children and their families living with addiction. The donation provided children with a Christmas Eve box and trips to the circus.

Govan High School Enhanced Nurture Provision supports children with difficulties arising from family circumstances. The donation was used towards some Christmas gifts & events.

Dnipro Kids appeal is supporting over 50 Ukrainian children living in the Edinburgh area who are refugees in Scotland from the war in Ukraine. The donation was used for some Christmas gifts and events.

Scot Baby Box Appeal is supporting Ukrainian kids living in the Glasgow area who are refugees in Scotland from the war in Ukraine. The donation was used for some "Santa Sacks" gifts.



Blameless charity trip to circus

Blameless Charity SC043688

In this issue we feature one of the charities that were the happy recipient of the donation,

Blameless Charity object is to

1 To advance education and raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drugs to disadvantaged children and young people within the community;

2 To provide recreational activities to children and young people who have been affected by addiction and provide opportunities for them to engage in safe but fun activities to escape from the pressures of their lives.

3 To provide an advisory and support service to those who are suffering from or affected in some way by addiction or are going through recovery in order to relieve their suffering and improve their lives and their families lives.



Colin McGowan explains the impact the donation had for their charity

'When I saw the donation came in From the Tartan Army Children's Charity for the sum of £2,500, I thought that this was amazing, and it allowed us to go ahead with confidence and book the circus outing to M&D's. We took 600 people to the circus and a further 205 later. The donation was the springboard we needed and gave us a big lift. It was heart-warming that the Tartan Army took a look at our charity and chose to make a donation to it. The kids were all excited that they were going to a circus paid for by the tartan army, and it's been fabulous.

We started the children's charity Blameless in 2012 and it was to help the children of alcoholic and addicts, as a lot of people don't understand that even though the addicts are going through their own situations, that it's the children, the spouses and the siblings that do all the real suffering. Sometimes they're doing without the basics, such as heating and food.

We were also able to launch our book 'There is ALWAYS Hope, which can be downloaded free and features its true-life stories of recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. Inside the book there is steppingstones to alcoholics anonymous, cocaine anonymous, narcotics anonymous, and family anonymous which is an organisation that helps to support people who are living with someone who is an addict. There is also mental health guides included in the book, as many people don't understand that the difficulties that the addicts are experiencing can impact on the mental health of the persons living with them. Last year 1330 people died due to drugs in Scotland, 1275 died due to alcoholism and there were 753 suicides. That's 3,358 in one year, which is 64 people a week, nine people a day, which means we lose someone every two and a half hours in Scotland from the combined problem of alcohol, drugs and suicides.

In the UK we are losing eighteen people a day to suicide alone, and it just seems to be getting worse. Scotland has 25,000 methadone users, there are 250,000 across the UK, and so the alcohol and drug problem is huge. The government is trying to help, but unfortunately it's not enough. We facilitate to offer a pathway to recovery for the whole family, because I feel that if we just deal with the drug and alcohol addiction in isolation, its like putting an Elastoplast on a gaping wound and that by itself won't solve the problem.

My own story was that a psychologist told me that if I drank for five days a week and stopped for two, I would be fine, but I don't think they realised when it enters the system of an addict it manifests itself into the phenomenon of a craving, and you are then powerless. People should remember that alcohol and drug addiction is not a life choice. Our charity Blameless can make a massive difference. We're doing 100 balls around the schools in a promotion to 'kick addiction'. We do talks about drugs around the north Lanarkshire schools, which we believe is making a real impact.

To point the finger of blame doesn't work, we must have a society understanding that something fundamentally went wrong with the individuals who are finding themselves trapped in the shadow of addiction and we need to try to guide them out. If we invest in helping those in need, to assist them through recovery this will be a huge help to their lives. Also remember there is a financial cost of addictions on society that is hard to quantify, but it will be in the millions, as in many cases it expands beyond the individual to family members, who through learned behaviours may end up in prison for example , and that is a cost to society that you can't measure.

We do know that getting people into recovery using 12 step recovery programmes can change them from being a financial burden to society to a meaningful member of it.

The children in these families affected by addiction are blameless and we hope that the small outings and activities that we can provide will help put a smile on their faces and bring them some happiness, be it to a circus or carnival, while we try to guide their parents into recovery.
Thank you again to The Tartan Army Children's Charity for their kind donation'.

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THE FRANK McAVENNIE COLUMN

Firstly, I would like to wish Stevie Clarke and the boys all the luck in the world moving forward into their 2023 campaign.

I shared a dressing room with Stevie at St Mirren just over 200 years ago, or so it feels. It was actually 1983. Such a long time ago and it still feels like yesterday. The good old days.

I feel sure like every other Scotland supporter that Stevie has to be the right man for the job, after all, Scotland has not competed in any major tournament since 1998 and Stevie took us through to the Euros, so, in my book he has lots of credit in the bank. Like all good managers, Stevie has always had something about him that will take his players to a higher level.

For example, when he went to West Ham with Zola, the coaching staff, who had been there for years came up to me and said, "In his first four days, he did five exercises that the players and staff had never seen before". That might not sound like much but in football terms that's huge.

Your average pundit will tell you Cyprus should be a given and that maybe Spain's a bigger challenge. Like everyone else I'll be there to watch the great players that Spain produces on a continuous level, but with the players Scotland have at the moment, I feel we could be a match for any team. The reality is there is no given in football anymore. Teams are getting stronger, better organised, especially at international level, but I feel sure if we turn up and play our best, Stevie's organisation will have a good chance in getting something out of the game.

I think the manager will have some difficult calls to make regarding picking his squad because every player wants to play for Scotland now. So, it won't be easy, but rest assured, we have quality players in the Scotland squad and Stevie will be decisive and he won't hesitate to change or leave people out if he thinks he has to.

So, the campaign starts on the 25th March with Cyprus and then three days later, Spain. Those first two games are at home and with the whole of Scotland and a little bit of luck behind them, it could see us get off to a great start.

It's going to be a very busy campaign. There's a lot of football to be played this year. We know our Scottish supporters will have one eye on that English fixture on the 12th September. They tell me it's a friendly.

I'm really chuffed to be asked by Iain Emerson to do a quarterly article and be part of the Famous Tartan Army Magazine. I'll have much more to say in the next edition when we have some games under our belt.

Enjoy the games, stay safe.
Macca









SEAN GRAHAM INTERNATIONAL MEMORIAL TROPHY 2023

Hamilton Accies Football Club are proud to be hosting the first ever Sean Graham International Memorial Trophy in aid of three Scottish charities.

Held in memory of Scotland football fan, writer Sean Graham, Celtic legend Jinky Johnstone, Rangers hero Fernando Ricksen and Scottish Rugby idol Doddie Weir, the event will see Renfrewshire United Old Firm Select take on the Famous Tartan Army Magazine/Scotland Legend Select at the ZLX Stadium, New Douglas Park, on Sunday, June 4, 2023.

The inaugural match will raise funds for the My Name'5 Doddie Foundation, Beatson Cancer Charity and the Hamilton Accies Community Trust, whilst also remembering the four brave personalities who each fought their own battle, Jinky, Fernando and Doddie with Motor Neurone Disease and Tartan Army member Sean with cancer.

However, the fundraiser is much more than just a football match, with a full day and evening of fun planned for the whole family including a magnificent funfair open at the stadium from noon, the game taking place at 4pm, followed by a four-course evening meal at 6.30pm, live entertainment, a silent auction and heads and tails.

Hamilton Accies director Colin McGowan said: "We are proud to be hosting the first ever Sean Graham International Memorial Trophy here at the ZLX Stadium in June.

"Sean was a renowned and popular member of the Tartan Army, who loved his football but sadly had a hard fought battle with cancer, passing away in 2021. This event will honour his memory, but also raise awareness of MND, a disease close to the hearts of the event organisers, and fought by sporting legends Jimmy Johnstone, Fernando Ricksen and Doddie Weir, whilst raising vital funds for the My Name'5 Doddie Foundation, Beatson Cancer Charity and HAFC Community Trust.

"Please show your support for these three fantastic charities and book your tickets now for a great family fun day out."

Tickets for the football match only cost £10 for adults, or £5 for the under 16s/over 65s/ disabled.

Tickets for the full day, including the football match, evening meal and entertainment costs just £90 per person.

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Charity No.: SC044442

HAFC Community Trust
Charity No.: SC0380553

READY TO GO AGAIN FOR EURO 2024



Photo: Scottish Sun

Steve Clarke has announced his squad for the following games.

Scotland v Cyprus UEFA EURO 2024 Qualifier
Saturday, 25 March, kick-off 2pm, Hampden Park

Scotland v Spain UEFA EURO 2024 Qualifier
Tuesday, 28 March, kick-off 7.45pm, Hampden Park



Squad hoping to get us of to a winning start is-

Goalkeepers:
Zander Clark (Hearts), Angus Gunn (Norwich City), Liam Kelly (Motherwell).
Defenders: Liam Cooper (Leeds United), Grant Hanley (Norwich City),
Jack Hendry (Club Brugge), Aaron Hickey (Brentford), Nathan Patterson (Everton),
Ryan Porteous (Watford), Andy Robertson (Liverpool), Kieran Tierney (Arsenal).

Midfielders:
tuart Armstrong (Southampton), Lewis Ferguson (Bologna),
Billy Gilmour (Brighton), Ryan Jack (Rangers), John McGinn (Aston Villa),
Callum McGregor (Celtic), Kenny McLean (Norwich City),
Scott McTominay (Manchester United).

Forwards:
Che Adams (Southampton), Jacob Brown (Stoke City), Ryan Christie (Bournemouth),
Lyndon Dykes (Queens Park Rangers).



Photo: PA

A warm welcome to Angus Gunn, The Norwich goalkeeper, who has switched allegiances from England to play for Scotland. Angus's dad is of course Bryan Gunn who won six caps for Scotland between 1990 and 1994. With Craig Gordon out with injury Angus is a welcome addition. Angus joins the uncapped duo of Zander Clark of Hearts and Motherwell's Liam Kelly.

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL GAME

This new lovely kit will be worn in the game versus England and in the opening game of our EURO Qualifying campaign to mark the 150 years of the national game.

Also - The Scottish Football Museum have opened their archives to share thousands of pages of historical records dating back to the earliest days of Scotland's national game.

The new digital archive holds the earliest records of Scottish football, giving a glimpse into the origins of the game in Scotland through Scottish FA minute books and Scottish FA annuals.

Richard McBrearty, Scottish Football Museum Curator said: "The thousands of pages of historical archive that have been released and provides an incredible resource for football in Scotland and around the world to learn about the foundations of Scotland's national game."

How to access the digital archives
The digital archives are available through the Scottish Football Museum's website.





LOOK OUT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE FAMOUS TARTAN ARMY MAGAZINE
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VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREES (VAR)

Michael McEwan gives his views on the impact VAR is having on the game here in Scotland.

The big talking point now in the beautiful game isn't the game it's VAR (Video Assistant Referees)

A VAR training centre has been in operation at Hampden Park since last year, officials have been learning how to use the technology there, while trials were taking place during youth matches.

VAR was introduced in to the Scots Cinch Premiership in October after three years of planning, development and testing.

It's co-ordinated centrally from the video operations room at Clydesdale House, which shares it name with Clydesdale FC, a founding member of the Scottish Football Association (SFA) that also revolutionised the laws of the game.

The SFA also introduced the modern day throw-in. VAR is operated in line with FIFA laws of the game using hawk eye technology, with SPFL partner QTV providing central facilities.

At the moment there is no goal technology, although there is a minimum of six cameras at games. There is two in the main stand, one on each of the 18-yard line, and one behind each goal.

While at league level there is no goal line technology, it's being utilised for Scottish Cup final matches, however at local level the cost to clubs make it impractical to roll out on a wide scale.

Scotland isn't the only nation to use GLT, for example in the United States MLS use the some model, though the VAR team review goal line incidents as part of their checks.

If the game is televised, then there will be additional cameras, which VAR will also have access to. VAR can just only recommend action to the referee. The referee makes the final decision .

It will assist on field referees in the event of a clear and obvious error, a serious missed incident in relation to straight red card, penalty area incidents, goals and mistaken identity.

As one Premiership Manager pointed out VAR shouldn't control the game that is what the referee is there to do.

In the six years since it's first use in the Netherlands, the technology has been rolled out in Europe.

The total cost of £1.2 million per season is to be met by all 12 clubs in the league, on a sliding scale, with the premiership winners paying around £195,000 and the 12th place team £67,000

VAR been in our game now for about five months now ,and I've got some initial feedback from fans, who don't have many good words to say about it.

Some say it slows the game down when it comes to making decisions and by doing this, the flow of the game has been interrupted.

From my perspective when I'm watching a game, my team scores a good goal, joy is taken out of it if VAR checks the goal.

One commentator's view is that a goal can be celebrated twice, when the team scores the goal ,and when VAR rule it is a good goal. A double celebration for the fans!

As we get to the business end of the season, it will be interesting to see the role VAR plays, if any, in the cup finals



and play offs. A month or so ago, a club appealed a red card that was given by VAR, it was overturned and the player was on the park in the next game.

During a recent Old Firm match at Hampden, VAR broke down for over 10 minutes. There have been other controversial decisions relating to VAR so far this season, and I am sure there will be more to come between now and the end of the season.

In the scenario where SPFL side gets drawn with a lower league team and they don't have VAR, they might have to buy it in and most clubs can't afford this.

I don't think there has been a weekend where I've watched the highlights or been at a game, that there isn't a controversial incident raised around VAR.

This technology was introduced to our game, in some ways to simplify the run of play in the game, but for the most part, in my opinion, it's slowing play down.

From 4- 4-2 to the offside rule fans are switched on to their team's run of play, but the stumbling involvement of VAR is a distraction from the thrill of the game.

Michael McEwan



HAMILTON ACADEMICAL F.C.

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