



*An Introduction to  
the National Team*

# SCOTLAND 101

*Tom Brogan*

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# Contents

Acknowledgements . . . . .	11
Introduction . . . . .	12
1. Scotland 0 England 0 – 1872 . . . . .	13
2. The First Hampden Park – 1873 . . . . .	17
3. Andrew Watson . . . . .	19
4. Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery . . . . .	22
5. Robert Smyth McColl . . . . .	24
6. Robert Cumming Hamilton . . . . .	27
7. Scotland 4 England 1 – 1900 . . . . .	29
8. The Ibrox Disaster – 1902 . . . . .	31
9. The Game That Changed the Offside Law – 1906 . . . . .	35
10. Alan Morton . . . . .	37
11. England 1 Scotland 5 – 1928 . . . . .	40
12. Hughie Gallacher Scores Five – 1929 . . . . .	44
13. Norway 3 Scotland 7 – 1929 . . . . .	47
14. The Hampden Roar . . . . .	49
15. Scotland 2 Austria 2 – 1933 . . . . .	52
16. Tommy Walker . . . . .	55
17. Scotland 2 Germany 0 – 1936 . . . . .	57
18. Scotland 3 England 1 – 1937 . . . . .	62
19. Scotland XI 5 England 4 – 1942 . . . . .	65
20. Billy Liddell . . . . .	68
21. George Young . . . . .	71
22. Jimmy Cowan . . . . .	74
23. Lawrie Reilly . . . . .	77
24. The SFA Refuse to Accept Scotland's Place at the 1950 World Cup . . . . .	80
25. Bobby Collins . . . . .	83
26. The Scotland Badge – 1953 . . . . .	86
27. Uruguay 7 Scotland 0 – 1954 . . . . .	88

28. Scotland 2 Hungary 4 – 1954. . . . .	91
29. Sir George Graham. . . . .	95
30. Scotland 4 Spain 2 – 1957 . . . . .	97
31. Matt Busby as Scotland Manager – 1958 . . . . .	100
32. France 2 Scotland 1 – 1958 . . . . .	105
33. Scotland Under-23s 4 England Under-23s 4 – 1960 .	108
34. England 9 Scotland 3 – 1961 . . . . .	111
35. Czechoslovakia 4 Scotland 2 (AET) – 1961 . . . . .	117
36. Denis Law Scores Three Hat-Tricks in a Year and a Day – 1962/63 . . . . .	121
37. Mr Baxter Goes to Wembley – 1963 . . . . .	125
38. Spain 2 Scotland 6 – 1963 . . . . .	128
39. John White . . . . .	131
40. Alan Gilzean . . . . .	133
41. Austria Abandoned – 1963 . . . . .	135
42. Scotland 1 Italy 0 – 1965 . . . . .	139
43. Pelé Comes to Glasgow – 1966. . . . .	143
44. England 2 Scotland 3 – 1967 . . . . .	147
45. Tommy Gemmell Boots Helmut Haller – 1969 . . .	156
46. Peter Lorimer. . . . .	159
47. Edna Neillis . . . . .	161
48. Scotland 2 Czechoslovakia 1 – 1973 . . . . .	165
49. Jimmy Johnstone Goes to Sea – 1974. . . . .	169
50. The Copenhagen Five – 1975 . . . . .	172
51. Scotland Under-23s 2 Netherlands Under-23s 0 (AET; Netherlands Win 4-3 On Penalties) – 1976 .	176
52. Scotland win the Cannes Youth Tournament – 1976	179
53. Bruce Rioch. . . . .	182
54. The Wembley Invasion – 1977 . . . . .	185
55. Santiago – 1977. . . . .	190
56. Anfield – 1977 . . . . .	195
57. Ally's Tartan Army – 1978 . . . . .	200

58. The Hampden Send-Off – 1978 . . . . .	202
59. Teófilo Cubillas. . . . .	205
60. Archie Gemmill’s Goal Against the Netherlands – 1978 . . . . .	209
61. Maradona Comes to Glasgow – 1979 . . . . .	212
62. First to Have Names on Shirts – 1979 . . . . .	216
63. The Tories vs Hampden Park . . . . .	218
64. Scotland Win the European Under-18 Championship – 1982 . . . . .	222
65. Scotland the Brave . . . . .	225
66. The Toepoke – 1982 . . . . .	228
67. Scotland 3 Spain 1 – 1984 . . . . .	231
68. The Death of Jock Stein – 1985 . . . . .	235
69. Only a Game? – 1986. . . . .	252
70. Only an Excuse? – 1986 . . . . .	254
71. Uruguay 0 Scotland 0 – 1986. . . . .	257
72. Andy Roxburgh. . . . .	262
73. Arthur Montford . . . . .	265
74. The U16 World Championship Final – 1989 . . . . .	268
75. Flower of Scotland . . . . .	272
76. Juan Cayasso – 1990 . . . . .	276
77. Ally McCoist . . . . .	279
78. Scotland Under-21s 4 Germany Under-21s 3 – 1992. . . . .	283
79. The Gentleman’s Agreement – 1992 . . . . .	286
80. Portugal 5 Scotland 0 – 1993. . . . .	288
81. The SFA vs Duncan Ferguson – 1994 . . . . .	292
82. Gary McAllister’s Penalty Miss – 1996 . . . . .	296
83. Estonia Fail to Arrive – 1996. . . . .	299
84. Julie Fleeting . . . . .	302
85. Hugh McIlvanney . . . . .	304
86. Tom Boyd. . . . .	307
87. Jim Leighton . . . . .	309

88. Berti Vogts . . . . .	312
89. Scotland 1 Netherlands 0 – 2003. . . . .	316
90. James McFadden from 35 Yards – 2007 . . . . .	319
91. Scotland 1 Italy 2 – 2007. . . . .	322
92. Boozegate – 2009. . . . .	325
93. 4-6-0 – 2010 . . . . .	329
94. Professor Stewart Hillis . . . . .	332
95. Scotland 2 England 2 – 2017. . . . .	335
96. Women’s World Cup – 2019 . . . . .	338
97. Andy Robertson . . . . .	341
98. John McGinn. . . . .	344
99. Serbia 1 Scotland 1 (AET; Scotland Win 5-4 on Penalties) – 2020 . . . . .	347
100. ‘Yes Sir, I Can Boogie’ . . . . .	351
101. Scotland 2 Spain 0 – 2023 . . . . .	353
Bibliography . . . . .	357

## Scotland 0 England 0 – 1872

30 November 1872

West of Scotland Cricket Ground, Glasgow

Attendance: 2,500

**Scotland:** Gardner [C] (Queen's Park), Kerr (Granville and Queen's Park), Taylor (Queen's Park), Thomson (Queen's Park), J. Smith (South Norwood and Queen's Park), R. Smith (South Norwood and Queen's Park), Weir (Queen's Park), Leckie (Queen's Park), Rhind (Queen's Park), Mackinnon (Queen's Park), Wotherspoon (Queen's Park)

**England:** Barker (Hertfordshire Rangers and Wanderers), Greenhalgh (Notts Club), Welch (Harrow Chequers and Wanderers), Chappell (Oxford University), Ottaway [C] (Oxford University), Smith (Oxford University), Chenery (Crystal Palace), Clegg (Sheffield), Brockbank (Cambridge University), Maynard (1st Surrey Rifles), Morice (Barnes and Harrow Chequers)

**Referee:** William Keay (honorary treasurer, Queen's Park)

THERE HAD been five unofficial matches played between Scotland and England sides before this date; the first, in March 1870 at Kennington Oval, resulted in a 1-1 draw. The most recent encounter had been in February 1872, again at the Oval, when a Scotland team lost 1-0.

In March of 1872, Glasgow's Queen's Park played against Wanderers of London in the semi-final of the FA Cup. The game

finished goalless, but Queen's Park could not afford to travel again to London for the replay, so scratched from the competition.

Charlie Alcock, England's captain in all five unofficial internationals, wrote in his 1906 book *Football The Association Game*<sup>1</sup> that this fixture 'was, beyond a doubt, mainly responsible for the institution of an international match between England and Scotland on a strict basis'.

Alcock felt that the previous games were not representative of football in Scotland as the players selected for Scotland were all habitants of southern England of Scottish extraction, adding 'And in some cases perhaps of even less substantial qualifications.' Alcock felt that the Wanderers-Queen's Park game could be called a bona fide international as the Queen's Park players were all Scots based in Scotland.

He issued a challenge in a Glasgow newspaper for England to play 11 Scots. His plan was to authenticate football in Scotland, which was at the time a poor relation to rugby. There had been a Scotland-England rugby international in Edinburgh in 1871, followed by a return in London a year later.

A letter signed by representatives of the leading rugby clubs appeared in *The Scotsman*, pointing out the absurdity of Scotland taking part in an international match played with rules that the majority of Scottish footballers, who played rugby, were unfamiliar with. 'There was, of course, a good deal of sense in the objection,' Alcock wrote, 'but as was only to be expected, it did not have any effect in checking the advance of the Association game.'

No organised body existed in Scotland, so Queen's Park agreed to host the match in Glasgow and took on responsibility for all the arrangements and for selecting the Scotland team. Their secretary Archibald Rae put out a call for players in the press.

Queen's Park had no ground of their own at the time. Glasgow Academical Rugby Club offered their Burnbank home free of charge. However, it was not enclosed so admission couldn't be charged. The West of Scotland Cricket Club's ground in Hamilton Crescent, Partick met that criteria, and the club

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1 Republished in 2014 as *The Classic Guide to Football*



received £20 for its hire. As well as cricket, the ground regularly hosted rugby matches.

Trial matches had been played, and various possible players had been looked at, but the Queen's Park committee opted to draw the Scottish team exclusively from their members.

The Scotland team wore the Queen's Park strip of dark-blue shirts with a red, single-lion crest, white knickerbockers, with blue-and-white-striped socks (Queen's Park's now-famous black-and-white one-inch stripes only came into being in late 1873).

The crowd was estimated at 2,500. They paid one shilling entry each. Ladies were admitted free. There had been rain over the past few days and fog the previous evening. The rain in the morning had relented, and by the time the teams came out, the sun was just about shining.

The game kicked off 15 minutes later than the advertised time of 2pm. 'The Scotchmen won the toss, and the strangers kicked off at a quarter past two,' wrote the *Glasgow Herald*.

Scotland played in a 2-2-6 formation, while England lined up in a 1-2-7 shape. There was a contrast in style between the two teams. It was noted by the *Glasgow Herald* that England 'had all the advantage of weight, their average being about two stones heavier than the Scotchmen'. England played a style which relied on individual dribbling and playing the ball forward, while the Scottish team played a passing game.

At half-time, goalkeeper Robert Gardner swapped places with forward Robert Smith. England did similar, with Barker going outfield and Maynard taking his place in goal.

*The Scotsman* summed the game up, 'The match, after an hour and a half's play, ended in a draw, Scotland having the best of it in the first half of the game, England in the second.'

The English weekly sporting paper, *Bell's Life*, reported that the match was 'one of the jolliest, one of the most spirited and most pleasant matches that have ever been played'.

In February 1873, Archibald Rae wrote to Scottish clubs playing the association rules to recommend the formation of the Scottish Football Association (SFA) and set up Scotland's own cup competition. The founding meeting of the SFA was held at

Dewar's Hotel on 13 March 1873, just five days after Scotland had lost a return match at the Oval 4-2 to England.

Association football had now become firmly established in Scotland.