



Hibernian in the Days of the Famous Five

Tom Wright

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This is the story of a football team that came back from the brink to become the most successful side in the entire country during the immediate post-war years.

Under the leadership of a sometimes brash but charismatic chairman, Hibernian would burst to the forefront of Scottish football during what was arguably the game's finest-ever period. With the game experiencing an unprecedented post-war crowd boom, these were indeed exciting times, and there was no more excitement to be found on a football field than at Easter Road. Fronted by a forward line who would in time earn the sobriquet 'The Famous Five', Hibernian would win three League Championships, narrowly miss out on another only on goal average, and another by a solitary point, all inside a six-year period, to become the most successful side by far in the club's long and illustrious history.

Although many thousands of column inches have been devoted to the magical quintet and their teammates, this is the first book to define the period in such detail. From the enterprising chairman Harry Swan joining the board in 1931 to Willie Ormond, the last surviving member of the five, retiring from the playing side of the game in 1961, it is all here. Inside you can read about the great games, the financial disputes, the transfers, the modern advent of floodlit football, the introduction of competitive European football, the perceived danger to the game from the television cameras, and much more.

Quite obviously the successful Hibernian side of the period was about much more than a celebrated forward line, but perhaps the greatest accolade that can ever be paid to the Famous Five is that even today, almost 60 years after they last played together, even the youngest of supporters still find the names Gordon Smith, Bobby Johnstone, Lawrie Reilly, Eddie Turnbull and Willie Ormond slipping from the tongue with consummate ease.

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