

That OTHER famous penalty kick!



An undoubted highlight of the Rangers social calendar in days of yore was the annual dance in Glasgow's Grosvenor Hotel. Directors, players and their wives would be joined by representatives from other Scottish clubs, including Celtic. In those days there was a healthy rivalry between the clubs but a cordial relationship away from the theatre of battle. It was a relationship that both clubs bought into heavily and fostered regardless of results on the pitch.

The dance of 1949 was no different. And it was a dance, make no doubt about it, as those in attendance spent the majority of the evening on the dance floor. That great Ibrox legend Willie Waddell was at that time recovering from injury, but it's reported that he 'danced as enthusiastically as anyone,' as did Willie Paton, who was also making rapid progress towards a complete recovery.

The general atmosphere was one of joyous abandon. All the inevitable worries of testing campaigns were forgotten as the Rangers delegation - and it was a full compliment - mingled with friends old and new. As the night of revelry progressed, there could be noted little animated groups of old and present Rangers players recounting the doughty deeds of the past and comparing the ancient and modern patterns of football. Jimmy Fleming, the great Rangers centre forward of the 1920s and 30s - who once scored nine in a single Scottish Cup tie - was keen to talk about penalty kicks, but not the most famous in the history of the Rangers, in the ever memorable Scottish Cup final of 1928, when the trophy was brought back to Ibrox after 25 years of miserable absence, but of a notable incident in the Glasgow Cup final of season 1929/30 against old foes Celtic at Hampden.

In the closing minutes of a desperately keen tussle, Rangers were awarded a penalty kick. It was left to captain Davie Meiklejohn to convert and win the silver. But Davie did not score and the result was a goalless draw which contained much concealed criticism of the squandered opportunity.

Davie, however, had the last laugh, and this is where Jimmy Fleming comes in. In the replay, the Ibrox forwards went on the rampage. Jimmy whipped on three goals and Sandy Archibald got one to make the total four without reply from the opposition. So now captain Meiklejohn was congratulated all round in having missed the spot kick although an old and famous half back, Jacky Robertson, had declared that a player who missed a penalty under the newly altered rule, which compelled the goalkeeper to stand on his line, should be sent to jail.

And this led to John Allan - author of *The Story of the Rangers and Eleven Great Years* - immortalising the incident.

"Bring forth the culprit," quoth the judge.
And when they brought him in,
"Silence in court," his Lordship cried;
"The trial will now begin."

And when the charge was read aloud
On every face there loomed

A look that said as plain as words,
"The prisoner is doomed."

"What do you plead?" the judge rapped out,
And fixed him with his eye;
"Guilty, M'Lord," the culprit said,
"I never told a lie."

"It grieves me sore," his Lordship said -
His voice was low and tense -
"To find a bright youth guilty of...
"Such serious offence.

"There on the spot the ball was placed,
"And then to score you fail;
"I cannot take a lenient view;
"You, Meik, must go to jail."

Two stalwart policemen led him out
And Meik was heard to say,
"That's done it; the next one we get
"I leave to Dougie Gray."

There was much hilarity from current players and stars of the past as John Allan's ditty made its rounds. The incident merely highlighted the wonderful rapport between old and new, and told a story which could be saved for generations to come.

While on the crowded dance floor, the happy throng swayed to the lilting music, and the hours slipped away all too quickly. The spectacle of hundreds of dancers was even more impressive by the touch of colour supplied by so many who swung the manly kilt. Director-Manager William Struth, Director Alan Morton and Billy Williamson - who made a habit of scoring in cup finals - were resplendent in the gay tartan that blended with the beautiful dresses of their dancing partners.

Chairman John F Wilson and our directors were pleased indeed to welcome so many guests from other clubs. Apart from Celtic, there were representatives from St Mirren, Partick Thistle, East Fife and Queen's Park, while the hierarchy of the Scottish League and the SFA were out in force.

One of the highlights of a rather splendid evening was the popularity of the artistic wall programmes, which many guests spent plenty of time marvelling over. These were the brainchild of Rangers reserve centre forward Ian McIntyre, and he was said to be blown away by the admiration many showed for his artwork. It was indeed a night to remember, but in reality it merely highlighted the incredible bond which existed between the players and directors at Rangers in that era, and yet another reminder of that great institution they called the Rangers.



Another group at our Dance. Standing (left to right)—Director G. C. P. Brown, Secretary J. Rogers Simpson, Director W. G. Bennett, captain John Shaw, Chairman J. F. Wilson, Director-Manager William Struth, Willie Thornton's partner, Miss Margaret McLeod, Willie himself (our longest serving player), and Director Alan L. Morton. Seated are Mrs. George Brown, Mrs. James Simpson, Mrs. John Shaw and Miss Peggy Morton.