

AUFC

Ayr United FC  
Unofficial  
Programme

SPFL Cinch Championship

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2021.

Kick-off 3pm

Somerset Park

Ayr United versus Raith Rovers



## Chit-Chat

Thank you for supporting the second edition of the unofficial programme. You will be pleased to know that this and future editions will contain photographs from David Sargent. He is the supreme Ayr United photographer.

Say what you like about watching football at Somerset Park (and plenty do!) but it is seldom dull. At 2-0 down to Arbroath and the ball on the penalty spot at the wrong end we were in a sticky position with less than half an hour of regulation time left. Fortunately Nicky Low's spot-kick was stopped by the crossbar rather than the net. Phew! Tomi Adeloje (70) and Mark McKenzie (87) had the place rocking. In stoppage time it was nearly rocking even more when Mark McKenzie's header was



*Ayr United Football Club*  
9. Tomi Adeloje

close but not quite close enough. It is debatable whether a 2-2 draw would have been considered satisfactory beforehand but we were glad to take it in the end. Including this match Arbroath have now had three wins and two draws out of their last five league fixtures at Ayr. Victory most certainly was not foretold in the statistics.

The statistical theme will be maintained to discuss the League Cup visit of Dundee United who came to Ayr having scored just one goal in their last eight visits here. After 120 minutes of torrid cup tie action it was necessary to revise that statistic to read two goals here in their last nine visits. It was a grudging update of a goal they quite simply did not deserve. Quite what possessed Nick Walsh to award a penalty and a red card can

only be guessed at. He was blatantly wrong on both counts. Lest there be accusations of Ayr United bias you may be told that even neutral opinion concurred. So rather than win by a Tomi Adeloje goal we then had to endure forty minutes with ten men. Dundee United then proceeded to win the shootout and therefore win the



League Cup. Win the League Cup? Wasn't it a knockout tie in the round of sixteen? No it must have been the final! Didn't you see the mass pitch invasion at the end? No apology will be made for the bitter tone of these notes. To put it in colloquial terms 'we wuz robbed'. The referee could hardly cite inexperience. He refereed this year's Scottish Cup final. The sensible thing to do would be to put it all

behind us but in football that is a difficult thing to do. Grudges can fester for decades.

Not only grudges can fester for decades. Adverse statistics can too. We have not won at Inverness since 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2003, when Stewart Kean scored in our 1-0 win. Okay the defeat at Inverness was narrow but it puts us into a situation where points have to be put on the board quickly. Our Fortress Somerset reputation is under serious threat otherwise. Since beating Dundee at Ayr on 21st November last year we have played eleven league fixtures at home. These number four defeats, six draws and one win. Our last home league win was so long ago that it has probably been forgotten - Ayr United 4 Alloa Athletic 1 on 30th January. One home league win in the last eleven! No home league wins in the last eight! Against that background victory over Raith Rovers is essential.

Duncan Carmichael

## Today's Visitors Raith Rovers

The traditional format for a 'Today's Visitors' feature is a player-by-player pen picture-style summary of the visiting squad. Of necessity that format is bland. You are no doubt familiar with the stereotype.

*'Tam Broon is a striker who has worked his way through the various age levels at his club's youth Academy. After gaining loan experience at Junior level he has returned to claim a first team place. He has an eye for goal and at 6'2" he is a force to be reckoned with in the air.'*

If you imagine this type of blandishment being repeated seventeen more times you will have an understanding as to why the completed article would be riven by disinterest. Yet historically this type of feature has been an essential source of reference. The fans need to know who they are barracking! Today such player information is available quite literally at your fingertips. A few taps on the phone will give you career details on any senior player. Please be cautious about Wikipedia though. The self edit function hardly promotes reliability. The point of this preamble is to alert you to this 'Today's Visitors' article being a general overview rather than a forensic scrutiny of the career details of each visiting player. Sorry it took so long to get to the point!

Last season Raith Rovers had a creditable third-place finish in the Championship. It gives lie to the popular misconception that a newly promoted club will struggle. Naturally John McGlynn and his coaching team are deserving of credit. By Christmas they had suffered merely one league defeat and beyond that point of the season there was no significant loss of momentum.

Their current league campaign had a most extraordinary start. The home fans were ecstatic when Lewis Vaughan (two), Dario Zanatta and Aidan Connolly put the team 4-0 up by the 65<sup>th</sup> minute. At that point many of the visiting Hamilton Accies fans started to drift from the ground. Football's capacity for the unpredictable then went

into overdrive and, as we all know, the result was 4-4. On 21st December, 1957, an even more topsy turvy league fixture took place just ten miles away from the match just referred to. Cowdenbeath took a 4-0 lead against Ayr United. We fought back to lead 5-4. Then we lost 6-5! Such events are a warning not to leave a game early. Your writer is speaking from experience having been there to the end when we had our stoppage time comeback at Dumbarton in 2017.

Raith's next league fixture resulted in a 1-0 defeat at Inverness (we know how it feels!) but the response was most impressive when they knocked Aberdeen out of the League Cup. This built up very nicely to a derby match at home to Dunfermline Athletic. Both clubs had started the league season more slowly than anticipated and it was an intriguing prospect as to who, if anyone, would grab the three points. Alas there was an abandonment due to lights failure. Some of you will remember a similar incident occurring at Ayr. On the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1979, the Ayr United versus Hearts League Cup tie was abandoned in the 57<sup>th</sup> minute when we had a 1-0 lead by courtesy of an Ian McAllister goal. The tie got replayed at Ayr on the Saturday (this had been the scheduled date for the second leg). This time it was a 2-2 draw. We then won 1-0 in the second leg at Tynecastle Park on the Monday.

Returning to topic it is notable that there was a flurry of signing activity during the summer at Stark's Park. These new recruits were James Keatings (Inverness Caledonian Thistle), Christophe Berra (Hearts), Tom Lang (Clyde), Dario Zanatta (Ayr United), Liam Dick (Alloa Athletic), Aidan Connolly (Falkirk), Matej Poplatnik (Livingston, loan), Blaise Riley-Snow (Alicante City), Ethon Varian (Stoke City, loan) and Kai Fotheringham (Dundee United, loan).

The turnover in playing staff at both clubs would indicate that last season's meetings (three draws) may give no hint as to this week's outcome.

## Ayr United FC 2021/22



## On This Day : 28<sup>th</sup> August

**28<sup>th</sup> August 1935**

**Ayr United 1 Motherwell 0 (League)**

Team: Bradley, Dyer, Bourhill, Taylor, Clark, Holland, Watters, McGibbons, Fleming, Fitzgerald and Rodger.

Motherwell: McClory, Grant, Ellis, Pollock, Blair, McGillivray, Ogilvie, Bremner, Macfadyen, Stevenson and Cleland.

The crowd was estimated at 15,000. This was remarkable for midweek especially since we had lost 5-1 away to Albion Rovers on the Saturday. However it has to be acknowledged that there was a large visiting support. It is a virtual certainty that a lot of fans would have got in too late for the only goal which came in the first minute. The scorer was Fally Rodger who accepted a pass then whipped the ball beyond Allan McClory from close range. There was a scare when Willie Macfadyen hit the post. Then, at the other end, Rodger had the ball in the net again only for it to be disallowed amongst protests from a few of the Ayr players. The remainder of the first half was strenuously fought and there was no let-up after the break.

An interesting piece of local news at this time was that a Monkton site had been chosen as the site for a new aerodrome. The ground formed part of the farms of Newdykes and Aitkenbrae in Monkton parish.



**Fally Rodger**

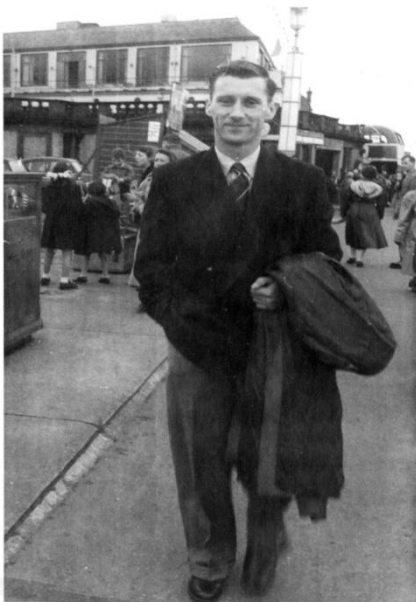
**28<sup>th</sup> August 1956**

**Third Lanark 1 Ayr United 5 (League Cup)**

Team: Round, Paterson, Thomson, Traynor, Gallagher, Haugh, Japp, McMillan, Lennox, Price and Murray.

Third Lanark: Robertson, Stewart, Lewis, Armstrong, Aitken, Redpath, Miller, Craig, Wark, Roy and McInnes.

Despite this heavy win Dundee United remained favourites to win the section. The other team in the group was Stenhousemuir. It was 1-1 at half-time and we were fortunate to be level at that stage. The home team carved out chances that were



wasted due to poor finishing. Joe McInnes even shot past with a penalty. Incidentally McInnes was an Ayr United scout three decades later. He was a former Third Lanark team mate of Ally MacLeod. The Ayr team fought for every ball and Willie Japp created havoc especially in the rampant second half. Guy Lennox scored twice and so did Willie Japp. Peter Price also scored. Tommy Wark was the Third Lanark scorer.

**Willie Japp**

**28<sup>th</sup> August 1976**

**Ayr United 1 Aberdeen 1 (League Cup) : Crowd 4,800**

Team: Sproat, Filippi, Murphy, Fleming, McDonald, McSherry, Phillips, Graham, Ingram, McCulloch and Robertson; substitutes – Hyslop and Gray.



Aberdeen: Clark, Kennedy, McLelland, Smith, Garner, Miller, Sullivan, Williamson, Harper, Scott and Graham; substitutes – Fleming and Jarvie.

A leg injury sustained in the 3-1 midweek win against Kilmarnock meant that Gordon Cramond had to sit out this match. However Jim McSherry **(pictured)** returned after suspension. In the opening minute John Murphy released Malky Robertson who made ground before unleashing a shot that brought Bobby Clark to his knees. One minute later Clark was picking the ball out of the net after Gerry Phillips had touched home a Johnny Graham cross. Aberdeen were heavily outplayed in the first half and

Bobby Clark had to put in a very heavy shift. Second half exchanges were more even and Joe Harper equalised with ten minutes left. Victory had been required to have a chance of progressing from the group.

**28<sup>th</sup> August 2004**

**Ayr United 2 Morton 0** (League) : Crowd 2,293

Team: Roy, Lyle, Dunlop, Smyth, McLaughlin, Steven Ferguson (Connolly 66), Conway, Ramsay, Brown (Andrew Ferguson 81), Kean and Henderson (Chaplain 75); unused substitutes – Burgess and Hillcoat.

Morton: Coyle, Collins, McCulloch, McCluskey (Bannerman 77), Greacen, McAllister, Millar, Maisano, Hawke (Paul Walker 15), Weatherson and Jason Walker (Williams 35); unused substitutes – Keenan and McGurn.

We started well and there was almost goal action when a diving header from Darren Henderson was superbly saved by Craig Coyle. Ten minutes later there was a close shave at the other end when Marc McCulloch headed inches past. Craig Conway went even closer when he drove the ball against the Morton post. The goal action eventually materialised. In the 57<sup>th</sup> minute Stewart Kean played a one-two with Graeme Brown before scoring with an angled drive. Eight minutes later Morton's Chris Millar hit the underside of the bar. In the 75<sup>th</sup> minute Darren Henderson slipped a superb ball to Stewart Kean who made it 2-0 with a drive into the top corner. In the closing minutes the only Morton threat came from a 25-yard free-kick taken by Scott Bannerman. Ludovic Roy held it comfortably. Steven Ferguson suffered a thigh strain in this match and did not return until a 5-1 defeat at Alloa on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2005. In that return match he went on in the 58<sup>th</sup> minute and got sent off four minutes later.



**Stewart Kean**

## 1-0 To The Honest Men



## Our All Time League Record Against Raith Rovers

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against
Home	75	34	25	16	97	74
Away	76	18	24	34	87	137
<b>Totals</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>211</b>

In terms of wins versus defeats the statistics are marginally in our favour but the last column is a bit disturbing with 211 goals conceded. The deficit is minus twenty-seven but in recent years it was even worse. In 2017/18 we had two 3-0 home wins which made inroads on the deficit. Three goals for Ayr United today would give us our 100<sup>th</sup> home goal in the series but let us not tempt fate. Last season there was nothing to separate the teams with all three fixtures ending in draws, two of which were scoreless.

The considerable number of goals conceded at Stark's Park can be easily traced. Match one in the series was on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1913, when the crimson-and-gold clad Ayr United team returned from Fife with a 5-1 defeat. Since then we have conceded five league goals at Stark's Park on six more occasions. If you do not wish



to know about an even worse demise than look away now. We had a 6-0 defeat there on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1948, and it remains our heaviest defeat in the series.

Anyway let's revert to some positivity. Our biggest winning margin in the series is 4-0. This precise result occurred at Stark's Park on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 1916, and at Somerset Park on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1959.

Behind the statistics there are a few stories of end-of-season drama involving Ayr United and Raith Rovers. At the conclusion of 2017/18 the whistle was blown on Ayr United 2 Albion Rovers 0 then we had to endure a terrifying wait before finding out that Raith Rovers had failed to beat Alloa Athletic with the consequence that we won the League One title. In 2008/09 the clubs were neck and neck in the closing weeks but Raith won the Second Division title on beating Queen's Park at Hampden in the second last match while we failed to beat Alloa Athletic at Somerset Park on the same afternoon.

At the end of season 1986/87 there was also a 'them-or-us' situation. We required a last day draw at home to Stirling Albion for promotion. The match was lost and there was an unexpected promotion for Raith Rovers (along with champions Meadowbank Thistle) on account of their win at Stranraer. Yet another 'them or us' scenario happened on the last day of season 1983/84. We had to win at Dumbarton to avoid relegation, this task being made more difficult by the home team being so strong that they were already guaranteed promotion to the Premier League. On the assumption that relegation rivals Raith Rovers would win away to Meadowbank Thistle (they did!) even a draw at Boghead Park would have consigned Ayr United to the drop along with the already doomed Alloa Athletic. Dumbarton 0 Ayr United 3 was the scarcely believable outcome. These end-of-season dramas against Raith Rovers can be traced back as far as 1907/08. On 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1908, Ayr FC played East Stirling at Somerset Park in the Second Division's final league fixture. An Ayr FC win was required to put the club one point ahead of top-placed Dumbarton who had completed all their fixtures. The East Stirling match ended 1-1 so Dumbarton remained top on goal average. Third-placed Raith Rovers had two games still to play and they sat one point behind the joint leaders. They won them both to come from behind to win the league by a three-point margin.

The statistics emphasise the importance of home advantage. Further emphasis of this can be seen from some of the patterns that have occurred over the years. For example Raith Rovers won a league game at Ayr on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1982, but it was 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1995, when they next won a league fixture here. Their winless run amounted to fourteen fixtures. Now here is a reciprocal statistic. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1916, Ayr United won at Stark's Park. Between that date and 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1963, there was only one Ayr league win at Stark's Park (12<sup>th</sup> January, 1946). The statistic was therefore one win in seventeen league visits there involving fourteen defeats and two draws.



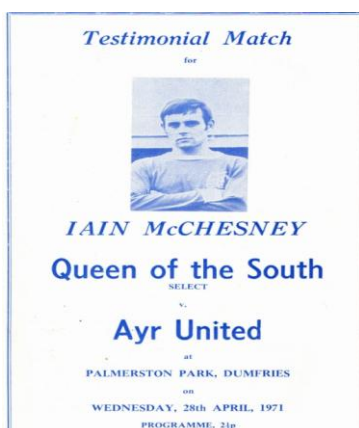
Ayr United versus Raith Rovers on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1989. John Sludden fends off Ronnie Coyle. Both have since passed away.

## Memories Are Made Of This



Raith Rovers versus Ayr United on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1988. The number ten is Gordon Dalziel whose shot went over the bar. Jim McCann is facing the camera. Joe Love and goalkeeper George Watson are on the line.

## Random Facts



- On 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1971, Ayr United supplied the testimonial opposition for Queen of the South's Ian McChesney.
  - In our run to the League Cup semi-final in 2011/12 three Premier League teams were beaten: Inverness Caledonian Thistle, Hearts and St.Mirren.
  - Two former Ayr United players have had the nickname Casper: Eric Morris and Mark Duthie.
- On 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1992, there were three Ayr United goals in a six-minute burst during our 4-2 win away to Raith Rovers.
  - In 1973 Ayr United's John Doyle was in the Scotland pool for the Home Internationals despite being part time.
  - Ally MacLeod's first game for Ayr United was at Berwick at the start of the 1964/65 season. He was the team captain.



## Our Craziest Goal Against Raith Rovers

Ayr United have scored 184 league goals against Raith Rovers but the most bizarre of the lot was the one scored here at Somerset Park on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1937. In sweeping towards the Second Division title just one point was dropped at home but it would have been two had it not been for the craziest of strikes against Raith Rovers. It was the only goal of the game and it came in the 10<sup>th</sup> minute. David Gemmell's goalward header was confidently held by the visiting goalkeeper. Even when he tripped over a team mate he maintained a tight grip on the ball. Unfortunately for him his grounded team mate was in a less than ideal position on the goal line. The stricken keeper's trip took him over the line. There was no relaxation of his sure grip but by now it was a goal. Or was it an own goal? Who had the credit or discredit? Ayr United's David Gemmell (**pictured**) got the somewhat dubious credit.

## AT A GLANCE 2021/22

Name	Previous Club	Date of signing	21/22		Ayr career	
			Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals
Tomi Adelaye	Barnet	01-07-21	7	4	7	4
Jonathan Afolabi	Celtic	Loan	0(4)	0	0(4)	0
Charlie Albinson	Warrington Town	08-07-21	5	0	5	0
Jack Baird	St.Mirren	04-09-20	7	0	41	1
Joe Chalmers	Ross County	15-09-20	1(2)	0	29(5)	1
Finn Ecrepont	Youth Academy	29-05-18	0(2)	0	0(4)	0
Markus Fjortoft	Morton	27-05-21	3(1)	0	3(1)	0
Michael Hewitt	Rangers	01-05-19	5	0	7(6)	0
Jordan Houston	Rangers	23-01-20	7	0	47(8)	0
James Maxwell	Rangers	Loan	2(1)	0	2(1)	0
Aidan McAdams	Morton	21-06-21	2	0	2	0
Nick McAllister	St.Mirren	27-05-21	0(1)	0	0(1)	0
Sean McGinty	Morton	27-05-21	6(1)	0	6(1)	0
Mark McKenzie	Youth Academy	01-07-19	6(1)	1	15(30)	3
Michael Miller	Raith Rovers	06-08-20	1(3)	0	22(9)	3
Aaron Muirhead	Falkirk	24-01-19	6(1)	0	70(6)	5
Andy Murdoch	Morton	12-07-18	7	1	82(4)	4
Daire O'Connor	Cliftonville	28-07-21	1(2)	0	1(2)	0
Patrick Reading	Stevenage Borough	21-07-20	6	0	30	1
Cameron Salkeld	Morton	25-05-21	5(2)	1	5(2)	1
Paul Smith	Youth Academy	03-07-19	0(1)	0	0(4)	0

Upto and including match played on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2021. Includes League, Scottish Cup, League Cup, Challenge Cup and play-offs. Brackets indicate player going on as a substitute but excludes substitute listings where the player has remained unused.

## Ayr United FC Results and Immediate Fixtures 2021/22 Home Games and Goalscorers in bold

Date	Opponents	Score	Comp	Crowd	
10-July	Albion Rovers	0-0	Lge Cup	150	McAdams Muirhead Baird McGinty Houston Salkeld Miller Murdoch Reading McKenzie Adelaye Hewitt Ecrepont Jeanes Smith Shootout lost 4-2
<b>13-July</b>	<b>Edinburgh City</b>	3-0	Lge Cup	500	Albinson Muirhead Baird McGinty Houston Salkeld Hewitt <b>Murdoch</b> Reading McKenzie <b>Adelaye2</b> Ecrepont Jeanes Miller Bilham Smith McAdams
20-July	Hamilton Accies	1-0	Lge Cup	801	Albinson Houston Baird McGinty Reading <b>Salkeld</b> Murdoch Muirhead Hewitt McKenzie Adelaye Miller Chalmers Fjortoft Ecrepont Bilham Jeanes Smith McAdams
<b>24-July</b>	<b>Falkirk</b>	(3-0)	Lge Cup		<b>Forfeited in our favour</b>
02-Aug	Kilmarnock	0-2	League	3,692	Albinson Houston Baird McGinty Reading Salkeld Murdoch Muirhead Hewitt McKenzie Adelaye Moffat O'Connor Maxwell Chalmers Fjortoft Afolabi McAdams
<b>07-Aug</b>	<b>Arbroath</b>	2-2	League	1,244	Albinson Fjortoft Baird McGinty Houston Salkeld Murdoch Maxwell Reading O'Connor <b>Adelaye</b> Muirhead McAllister Chalmers Hewitt <b>McKenzie</b> Afolabi McAdams
<b>14-Aug</b>	<b>Dundee United</b>	1-1 aet	Lge Cup	2,196	McAdams Houston Baird Fjortoft Reading Hewitt Murdoch Muirhead Maxwell McKenzie <b>Adelaye</b> McGinty Miller O'Connor Salkeld McAllister Chalmers Smith Afolabi Albinson Shootout 3-4
21-Aug	Inverness CT	0-1	League	2,032	Albinson Houston Hewitt Fjortoft Baird McGinty Muirhead Murdoch Chalmers McKenzie Adelaye Moffat Miller (Michael) O'Connor Salkeld Afolabi Ecrepont Miller (Mateusz)
<b>28-Aug</b>	<b>Raith Rovers</b>		League		
04-Sep	Rangers B		Chall Cup		
<b>11-Sep</b>	<b>Dunfermline</b>		League		

## **Ayr United squad**

21 Charlie Albinson  
1 Aidan McAdams  
9 Tomi Adeloye  
24 Jonathan Afolabi  
30 Jack Baird  
18 Joe Chalmers  
25 Finn Ecrepont  
23 Markus Fjortoft  
20 Michael Hewitt  
2 Jordan Houston  
14 James Maxwell  
5 Sean McGinty  
22 Mark McKenzie  
8 Michael Miller  
7 Michael Moffat  
4 Aaron Muirhead  
6 Andy Murdoch  
10 Daire O'Connor  
3 Patrick Reading  
11 Cameron Salkeld  
31 Paul Smith

## **Raith Rovers squad**

1 Jamie MacDonald  
17 Robbie Thomson  
25 Aaron Arnott  
6 Kyle Benedictus  
5 Christophe Berra  
7 Aidan Connolly  
3 Liam Dick  
21 Kai Fotheringham  
9 James Keatings  
12 Tom Lang  
8 Ross Matthews  
14 David McKay  
26 Kieran Mitchell  
99 Matej Poplatnik  
15 Dylan Tait  
2 Reghan Tumilty  
23 Blaise Riley-Snow  
18 Ethon Varian  
10 Lewis Vaughan  
29 Greig Young  
11 Dario Zanatta

**Referee: Chris Graham : Assistant: Ralph Gordon : Assistant: Scott Anderson**



That concludes the latest issue. Thank you for reading it through and showing your support. Future issues will come your way on a semi-regular basis.

# Jilly Milly Crafts

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