

The Dream Team

This submission to the Regimental Website is prompted by the latest group of inductions into the Scottish Soccer Hall of Fame. Those already ensconced there lean heavily towards yesteryear e.g. Geordie Young, Willie Bauld, Willie Waddell, Gordon Smith etc., while I confess to hardly knowing some of the more recent entries. That's as may be but the older one gets the more one likes to dream of days of yore!

My best memories of regimental football are also to be found in days long gone, some of them from as long as 55 years ago and I have come up with my own version of those who deserve to be up there in the regimental pantheon.

Jeff Mackay/Johnny Bateson

John Sweeney

Danny Cummings

Dickie Paterson

Dusty '07

Sauchie Hall

Dinger Bell

Heinie Topping

The King

? ?

Tommy Mc Guinness

Substitutes: Donald Jones, Johnny Greechan, Steed Wilson.

Goalkeeper: Truly debatable - Jeff Mackay (1Seaforth) or Johnny Bateson. Jeff was a class act, a Ross-shire lad, big, strong, powerful who eventually went senior. He truly commanded his penalty area. But what about Johnny? Brave as a lion. He was stockily built and not very tall. He had a great understanding with his defence and not slow to let them know who was in charge! I lean towards Jeff, however, because of my selection of the two full backs.

Right Back: Only one possible candidate - John Sweeney (1 Seaforth) John was a class act, already senior with Dunfermline Athletic before his National Service. He went on to win a Scottish Cup Winners' Medal with them.

Left Back: No question - Danny Cummings (1Seaforth). He and Sweeney had a perfect understanding not only between themselves but also with Jeff in goal.

Right Half: Probably a strange selection to almost all of you but I go for Dickie Paterson, B Coy 1 Seaforth. Dickie was another true son of Ross-shire. He could play more than a wee bit but, most importantly, he could stop them playing who thought they could play. Dickie was one of the hardest men I ever met, on and off the field. I can't recall if he played for the battalion, but in my book he fully deserves his place in my team.

Centre Half: Only one candidate – Dusty '07, Mr Dependable. He had great awareness and positional sense, as a result of which much of what he did seemed easy. He went calmly about his business but beware any opponent who tried to use foul play as a last resort. As we used to say Dusty could dig when it was required!

Left Half: Again only one candidate – The Peerless Sauchie. What a player. If we had an MVP (Most Valuable Player) as they do in American team sports, then for me Sauchie would win it every week. He was strongly built, a very smooth mover with the ball, a wee bit reminiscent of Paul McStay in this respect, and strong as a bull in the tackle. He was always there when needed, either in defence or spurring on his forwards.

Right Wing: It's got to be Dinger. His main asset was blistering speed allied with an ability to score the odd valuable goal. What more do you want from a winger? Ability to cross a ball? I think Dinger and Tommy McGuinness had an arrangement. "You cross the balls from the left Tommy for Kenny to score with his head and I'll hare on up the right and create chaos in their defence, score a few of my own, and maybe just get a wee bit in their face at the same time." Who among you remembers Major Crowe stomping up the touch line complete with bunnet trying to get up to Bell who would be stating his case to an opponent and the referee. All one could hear was "Bell! Bell! Stop it now Bell!" This usually worked – for a wee while anyway.

Inside Right: How about Heinie? He wasn't the quickest. He wasn't the biggest. But he was what the old inside forward was all about. He could send an opponent the wrong way with the drop of the shoulder, nice as you like, before slipping the ball inside the full back for Dinger to run on to. He was a rare wee Scottish ball player!

Centre Forward: No contest. It's got to be The King! King of what? King of goal scorers that's what. The nearest I can come in comparison is Nat Lofthouse, the old Bolton "Rummel-'em-up" centre forward, who was also possessed of a great ability to score with his head. While on the subject of heading, it's worthwhile repeating Kenny's oft screamed instruction to Tommy McGuinness "Wait a wee minute Tommy.....Hing it now. Hing it Now." Result – Perfect cross by Tommy and headed goal by Kenny for the Queen's Own. He was the goal scorer supreme and lost no opportunity to let people know how good he was. There was even the incident in Singapore when Kenny was playing for the Combined Services against, it was either an English First Division or Singapore National side, and someone on the management side who didn't know him wanted to substitute him at half time. Kenny got word of this, sat on the ball in the centre circle at half-time and refused to leave the pitch. Some centre forward! Some guy!

Inside Left: I need some help on this one. Any suggestions?

Outside Left: Again no contest – Wee Tommy McGuinness. I can hardly remember Tommy ever being injured. He was so quick on his feet, could send an opponent the wrong way just by looking at him and could he cross a ball! He and The King were the Willie Waddell and Willie Thornton of Army football.

I suppose this selection of mine will end up being somewhat controversial. So what. Such exercises are purely subjective anyway and if they provide a stimulus for other contributions to the Regimental Website then all to the good.

Last Word – I may have played some players slightly out of position. Again – so what. They were all blessed with great ability and could easily have adapted to the requirements of the team.