

## **THE POPPY DAY FIXTURES – FOOTBALL CARES**

### **SPL BACKS POPPY APPEAL**

Scotland's leading football clubs are backing the 2008 Scottish Poppy Appeal. A campaign was launched today (Monday, 3 November) at Falkirk FC – The Poppy Day Fixtures - which will see players of every team in the SPL wearing a poppy – the symbol of remembrance - to show their support for the 2008 Scottish Poppy Appeal.

Poppyscotland, the charity behind the Appeal, hopes that the support of the Scottish Premier League will help make this their most successful year yet. Hearts Player and Poppyscotland Ambassador Michael Stewart joined Executive Chairman of the SPL, Lex Gold, at the launch ahead of the Poppy Day football fixtures on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November.

The campaign is a first for Scottish, and indeed, British football, with all the top league teams wearing the poppy during play.

Clubs will also support the Appeal - which raises money for veterans and their dependants in Scotland - in a number of other ways, such as holding poppy collections at their grounds or selling limited edition poppy shirts in a bid to raise awareness of the Scottish Poppy Appeal.

Chief Executive of Poppyscotland, Jim Panton spoke of his gratitude towards the SPL at the launch event. He said: "This is the first time that every club in the Scottish Premier League will wear poppies as they play during the Poppy Day fixtures and their support is greatly appreciated.

"This year the need to support the Scottish Poppy Appeal is greater than ever and we have set ourselves the target of raising £2 million for veterans and their families living in Scotland. I am sure that raising awareness of the Appeal amongst Scotland's football fans will help us to achieve this goal.

"I would like to thank the SPL and I hope that everyone in Scotland will follow the lead of our footballers by wearing their poppies with pride."

Hearts player Michael Stewart, who helps raise awareness of the Appeal through his role as a Poppyscotland Ambassador, explained that he was thrilled that every team has pledged their support to the charity. He said: "For a lot of Scots, footballers are their heroes but for me the real heroes are those who risk their lives in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Many Servicemen and women come home with physical and mental scars and Poppyscotland helps them readjust to civilian life. I hope that all football fans support this year's Appeal to make sure they get the help they deserve."

Lex Gold, Executive Chairman of the SPL, said: "We are delighted to support the Scottish Poppy Appeal. This year's Appeal marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the First World War. With this in mind our clubs will be wearing the poppy to pay tribute to and recognise the sacrifices of those who have served our country."

**Ends**

**Notes to Editor:**

The following Clydesdale Bank Premier League fixtures are scheduled during Poppy Weekend:

**November 8**

Celtic v Motherwell

Dundee United v Aberdeen

Hamilton v Falkirk

Hibernian v Inverness

St Mirren v Hearts

**November 9**

Kilmarnock v Rangers

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**Poppyscotland** (formerly The Earl Haig Fund Scotland) was founded in 1921 to provide practical help to ex-Service men and women and their dependants living in Scotland. Money raised from the annual Scottish Poppy Appeal and other fundraising activities is spent on:

- Providing direct financial assistance to individuals
- Funding an advice service, including pension claims and appeals
- Supporting employment of veterans with disabilities in Lady Haig's Poppy Factory
- Grants and research for organisations that deliver specialist support to veterans

To find out more about Poppyscotland visit [www.poppyscotland.org.uk](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk)

For information about the SPL visit [www.scotprem.com](http://www.scotprem.com)