

## New Season - It's Just A Little Too Soon

Written by Harry Brady

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When I was growing up my summers were jam packed with sport. The football season ended and cricket began: on the telly when raining in Glasgow then in the back garden when the sun shone. The summer moved on and a sign that we were a week away from school holidays was the start of Wimbledon. We hit the last week in June and the tennis racket came out and the red ash courts of the public parks resounded to my best Jimmy Connors impersonation (yes there used to be tennis courts across public parks – and we still didn't produce anyone who could play the game). Middle of July and we were into the golf season with The Open on TV and my brother and I thrashing around Deacons Bank on Glasgow's South Side. By the end of July I'd had a summer holiday and was mixing golf, cricket and tennis with the occasional game of 20 a-side down the park, Tour De France impersonation and generally having a life. Come mid August however and I'd had my break and was ready to become all consumed in football again. And that's my beef with starting the season up so soon – I like to have another life, I look to do other things, but I'm addicted to Celtic and once the season begins everything else goes out of the window. Starting back on 23<sup>rd</sup> July is just far too soon.

Some people reading this will no doubt think I'm nuts, they've been sitting around since the cup final desperate for the new season, and that's fine but not for me. It isn't that I'm not fussed about the new season, but like an addict I know I'll become absorbed by it so the longer I get a break the better. I may now have gone beyond 40 and my long summer days of playing whatever sport was the big deal on TV that week may have passed, but I still have a life which benefits from having a break from football. As of this Sunday (then with the crazy exception of the following weekend) all weekend activities must revolve around accommodating watching

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Celtic.

I sometimes wonder whether the people who run sports just don't understand fans or pro-actively do things just to annoy because of the supporters I know, most share my opinion. I get it for the administrators, it is their job so it makes no difference and for the journalists, many are self employed so the shorter the summer break the easier it is to pay the mortgage, but give us a break, a decent one.

Most of the fans I know love football and love the club they support. They will attend all home games and many away but they want (and need) a break. The people I know who are desperate for the new season to begin seem to fall into two extreme camps. People with absolutely no life whatsoever for whom each day has been a long drawn out wait until the next game or people who have a general casual interest and whose life will not be altered much by the coming campaign.

My wife has no interest in football but 20 years ago accepted that it governed how we organised our social lives so I dread reminding her that only 1 week into the Glasgow Fair fortnight our season begins and my ability to commit to anything on a weekend is limited.

Hopefully this season European interest will be beyond Christmas – just about the time we can have confidence that Lenny is about to secure his first title (J!). Already my addiction is kicking in as I sat with my laptop on getting a stream of the last 15 mins of an open house training session – our 1-0 victory over Cardiff.

I love Celtic and will once again become fully absorbed in the season ahead. It's just all a little too soon.