Aberdeen Football Club (also known as The Dons or The Reds) are a Scottish professional football club based in Aberdeen , Scotland . They compete in the Scottish Premiership and have never been relegated from the top division of the Scottish football league system since they were promoted in 1905 . Aberdeen have won four Scottish league titles , seven Scottish Cups and six Scottish League Cups . They are also the only Scottish team to have won two European trophies , having won the European Cup Winners ' Cup and the European Super Cup in 1983 .

Formed in 1903 as a result of the amalgamation of three clubs from Aberdeen , they rarely challenged for honours until the post war decade , when they won each of the major Scottish trophies under manager Dave Halliday . This level of success was surpassed in the 1980s , when , under the management of Alex Ferguson , they won three league titles , four Scottish Cups and a Scottish League Cup , alongside the two European trophies . Aberdeen were the last club outside of the Old Firm to win a league title , in 1984 ? 85 , and also the last Scottish team to win a European trophy . The team has enjoyed less success since this golden era , but a 19 @-@ year wait for a major trophy was ended by winning the 2013 ? 14 Scottish League Cup .

Aberdeen have played at Pittodrie Stadium since their inception. The ground currently has a capacity of 20 @,@ 961 and was the first all @-@ seated and all @-@ covered stadium in the United Kingdom. Pittodrie was also the first football stadium to feature a dugout, an invention of player and coach Donald Colman. The club 's colours have been primarily red and white since 1939; before this, they played in black and gold vertical stripes. Aberdeen attract support from the city and surrounding areas, as they are the only senior team within a wide area. Aberdeen have no geographically close rivals; their nearest neighbours at the same level are in the city of Dundee.

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= = History = =

= = = Formation and early years (1903?1939) = = =
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The current Aberdeen F.C. was formed following the merger of three clubs based in the city? Aberdeen, Victoria United and Orion? in 1903. The new club played its first match on 15 August 1903, a 1? 1 draw with Stenhousemuir. That first season produced a win in the Aberdeenshire Cup, but only a third @-@ place finish in the Northern League. The club applied for membership of the Scottish League for the following season, and were elected to the Second Division, rather than the First.

In 1904, the club were managed by Jimmy Philip. At the end of its first season, despite having finished seventh out of twelve teams, Aberdeen were elected to the new, expanded First Division. They have remained in the top tier of Scottish football ever since, a record shared only with Celtic. From 1906, the club made steady progress, with a Scottish Cup semi @-@ final appearance in 1908 and another in 1911. In that season of 1910? 11, Aberdeen recorded their first victories over the Old Firm, and led the league for a time, but finished the season in second place.

Wartime affected the club as much as any other; despite spending cuts and other economies, by 1917 the situation became untenable. Aberdeen dropped out of competitive football, along with Dundee and Raith Rovers. Senior football returned on 16 August 1919, and Aberdeen resumed with a fixture against Albion Rovers. Philip was still in charge, and continued to oversee a team capable of isolated good results, but never quite able to sustain a challenge long enough to win a trophy. In 1923, Aberdeen were drawn against Peterhead in the Scottish Cup, and posted their record score? a 13? 0 victory. Philip retired a year later, and was replaced as manager by Paddy Travers. He presided over the team 's first Scottish Cup final in 1937.

Travers ' " trainer " ? first team coach in modern parlance ? was former player Donald Colman . Colman was regarded as a brilliant and innovative thinker about football , and conceived the dug @-@ out , a covered area set slightly below the level of the playing surface to better aid his observations . Everton visited Pittodrie soon after its introduction , and exported the idea to the

English leagues, from where it spread throughout the football @-@ playing world. Travers left to become manager of Clyde in 1939.

= = = Halliday to McNeill (1939 ? 1978) = = =

Travers was replaced by Dave Halliday . Halliday went to his ex club Queen of the South to sign inside forward George Hamilton . This would be as shrewd a signing as Halliday would ever make . However Halliday had barely begun his work when the Second World War halted competitive football in the United Kingdom .

Halliday 's place in the Aberdeen Hall of Fame was secured after the war when he became the first manager to bring national trophies to Pittodrie . Aberdeen , now playing in red , won the Southern League Cup in the 1945 ? 46 season , defeating Rangers 3 ? 2 at Hampden . They then reached the 1947 Scottish Cup final , defeating Hibernian 2 ? 1 with the inspirational Hamilton scoring to gain the club 's first major trophy . From this early success , Halliday 's side reached two more Scottish Cup finals , in 1953 and 1954 , although both were lost . Halliday 's team were not to be denied , however , and the following season , 1954 ? 55 , Aberdeen won their first Scottish League title . Though league winners , the club did not participate in the first European Cup competition ? Scotland 's place was awarded to Hibernian , who took part by special invitation .

Halliday and Hamilton left at the end of that championship @-@ winning season, Halliday replaced by Davie Shaw. Aberdeen won the League Cup under his guidance, beating St Mirren in 1955? 56, and reached another Scottish Cup final in 1959. However, Shaw stepped aside for another former favourite player, Tommy Pearson, in 1959. Pearson 's time in charge coincided with a high turnover of players, and yielded no trophies. He retired in 1965, making way for Eddie Turnbull. Turnbull led Aberdeen to two Scottish Cup finals against Celtic, the first a loss in 1967.

Aberdeen first played in Europe in the 1967 ? 68 Cup Winner 's Cup , qualifying as runners @-@ up to Celtic in the Scottish Cup final . Their first tie was a 14 ? 1 aggregate victory over KR Reykjavik , although they lost the second round tie with Standard Liège 3 ? 2 on aggregate . Two years later , Derek " Cup @-@ tie " McKay recorded the only four goals of his Aberdeen career to help his team to the 1969 ? 70 Scottish Cup , scoring the winning goals in the quarter- and semi final , and two in the final itself . As Scottish Cup holders , Aberdeen once again qualified for the same competition , but were eliminated in the first round following a 4 ? 4 aggregate tie with Honvéd . This tie , level after extra time and also level on away goals , was decided by the first penalty shoot @-@ out in UEFA competition history , Honvéd winning the shootout 5 ? 4 in Budapest .

The Aberdeen side of the 1970s regularly challenged for domestic honours. However, they rarely won trophies, with the exception of the Drybrough Cup in 1971 under Jimmy Bonthrone and the League Cup in 1976, under Ally MacLeod. During this decade, Aberdeen had five managers: Eddie Turnbull, Jimmy Bonthrone, Ally MacLeod, Billy McNeill and Alex Ferguson. They reached two more national cup finals? the Scottish Cup in 1978 under Billy McNeill and the League Cup in the following season under the new manager Alex Ferguson.

= = = Alex Ferguson era (1978 ? 1986) = = =

Under Ferguson 's guidance , the club won three league championships , four Scottish Cups , the European Cup Winner 's Cup , the European Super Cup , a League Cup , and a Drybrough Cup ? all in the space of seven years . Players such as Jim Leighton , Willie Miller , Alex McLeish and Gordon Strachan became the backbone of the team . Aberdeen 's second League title was won in 1979 ? 80 , and this initial success was built on , with Scottish Cup wins in three successive seasons from 1982 to 1984 , and two more league titles in 1983 ? 84 and 1984 ? 85 .

In the European Cup Winners ' Cup in 1983 Aberdeen beat FC Sion , Dinamo Tirana and Lech Pozna? to face the German Cup winners Bayern Munich . This game was won 3 ? 2 at Pittodrie after a goalless draw in Germany , John Hewitt with the winning goal . They then faced now defunct Belgian club Waterschei in the semi @-@ final . Aberdeen beat them 5 ? 1 at home , and lost for the first time in the tournament , 1 ? 0 away , resulting in an aggregate victory which sent Aberdeen to

the final . On 11 May 1983 , Aberdeen beat Real Madrid 2 ? 1 after extra time to win the cup and become only the third Scottish side to win a European trophy . The club released a song , " European Song " , to coincide with the appearance in the final . This was followed up with the capture of the European Super Cup in December , when Hamburger SV were beaten over two legs .

Aberdeen reached the semi @-@ finals of the 1983 ? 84 European Cup Winners ' Cup , before losing to Porto 2 ? 0 on aggregate . In the first round of the 1984 ? 85 European Champion Club 's Cup Aberdeen lost to East Berlin side BFC Dynamo in a penalty shoot @-@ out 4 ? 5 , following a 3 ? 3 on aggregate in regular times . Today , both clubs enjoy friendly relations .

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= = = Post @-@ Ferguson (1987?1999) = = =
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After Ferguson moved south of the border to manage Manchester United in November 1986, Aberdeen struggled to compete with Celtic and a resurgent Rangers.

Aberdeen signed new co @-@ managers in 1989 , pairing Alex Smith and Jocky Scott . A number of foreign players were signed , including Dutch internationals Theo Snelders and Hans Gillhaus . In the 1989 ? 90 the club won both the Scottish Cup and the Scottish League Cup . In the 1990 ? 91 they lost the last game of the season , and the league title , to Rangers . Former player Willie Miller took over in 1992 and presided over two seasons where Aberdeen came close to winning the title . However , he was sacked in 1995 after a bad season , and the club had to rely on a play @-@ off victory over Dunfermline Athletic to retain their Premier League status . Aberdeen replaced him with Roy Aitken . Despite a Scottish League Cup success beating Dundee in 1995 , the club continued to struggle . Alex Miller and Paul Hegarty had spells in charge in the late 1990s , but with the financial burden of a new stand putting the club into debt for the first time in its history , the directors turned to Stewart Milne , a local businessman whose firm had built the stand , to bring business acumen to the running of the club .

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= = = Skovdahl to Brown (1999 ? 2013) = = =
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Aberdeen 's first (and only to date) non @-@ Scottish manager , Ebbe Skovdahl , was appointed in 1999 and his time in charge coincided with some of the heaviest defeats in the club 's history . The low point of the club 's history came in the 1999 ? 2000 season , when they finished last in the Premier division . As the SPL was being expanded to 12 teams , there was then a three team play @-@ off . However , as Falkirk 's stadium did not meet SPL requirements , Aberdeen retained their status in the top flight . Subsequent to this , and with the club in debt for the first time following the construction of a new stand at one end of the ground , a policy of trying to live within their means has meant that the club has not approached the heights of the 1980s .

Steve Paterson was appointed to replace Skovdahl but lasted only two seasons. Paterson 's tenure with Aberdeen was marred by his abuse of alcohol. In March 2003 he failed to attend a home game against Dundee due to being too hungover after a night of binge drinking prior to the match.

Jimmy Calderwood took over in 2004 and Aberdeen posted more consistent results than in previous seasons . In the 2006 ? 07 season , the club finished in third place in the league and entered the final qualifying round for the 2007 ? 08 UEFA Cup . Aberdeen defeated Dnipro on the away goals rule to progress (the first time Aberdeen had won on away goals in European football for 40 years) . They went on to beat F.C. Copenhagen 4 ? 0 , which was the biggest margin of victory and one of Pittodrie 's biggest crowds since the 1980s . This set up a meeting with German giants Bayern Munich , which they lost 7 ? 3 on aggregate after a 2 ? 2 draw which saw Aberdeen lead twice in the first leg . Calderwood was sacked by Aberdeen on 24 May 2009 , hours after he took the club to a fourth @-@ place finish and back into Europe . Poor domestic cup performances were thought to be the reason for Calderwood 's dismissal .

Mark McGhee of Motherwell was appointed as Calderwood 's replacement on 12 June 2009. McGhee controversially dismissed Aberdeen legend and goalkeeping coach Jim Leighton in August 2009 and replaced him with Colin Meldrum. Aberdeen suffered a 9 ? 0 defeat to Celtic on 6

November 2010, their heaviest ever defeat. McGhee and his assistants were eventually sacked on 1 December 2010.

Aberdeen approached Craig Brown , who was working without a contract at Motherwell , to replace McGhee . Brown initially rebuffed an offer made on 8 December 2010 ; but after further discussions with the club Brown resigned as manager at Motherwell to be announced as the next manager at Aberdeen on 10 December 2010 . The first act of the new management team of Brown and Archie Knox was to re @-@ instate Jim Leighton . Aberdeen failed to produce better results under Craig Brown 's tenure , and in March 2013 announced his retirement to take up a non @-@ executive director role on the club 's board .

= = = Recent years (2013 ? present) = = =

Derek McInnes was announced as the successor to Craig Brown in March 2013 . In McInnes ' first season as manager , Aberdeen won the 2013 ? 14 Scottish League Cup after defeating Inverness 4 ? 2 on penalties , their first trophy in 19 years . Aberdeen finished third in the Scottish Premiership , and began the next season by coming through the early rounds of the Europa League , beating Dutch club FC Groningen before eventually being eliminated by Spanish side Real Sociedad . The club ended the season in second place , their best league position since 1993 ? 94 . In the following season 's Europa League , they were again defeated in the third round , this time by FC Kairat . Following a title challenge against Celtic , the team finished the league as runners @-@ up for the second year running .

= = Colours and crest = =

For the first season of the club 's existence, the team played in a predominantly white strip. This is variously reported as all @-@ white, or as white shirts with blue shorts and socks. This colour scheme was the direct descendant of the colours worn by the precursor Aberdeen club, but lasted only one season before being replaced.

For the 1904 ? 05 season , Aberdeen adopted a black and gold striped shirt , which led to the team being nicknamed " Wasps " . This strip , with only minor variations , was worn until just before the start of the Second World War . The blue shorts lasted until 1911 , and then were replaced with white ones . Socks were black with gold trim , either as stripes or as a solid bar at the turndown .

In March 1939 , Aberdeen changed the black and gold colours to red and white , reflecting the silver and red colours of the official City of Aberdeen arms . The first red strips were worn with white shorts , with either red or white socks from 1939 until the 1965 ? 66 season . In 1966 , Aberdeen adopted red shorts , making the official kit all @-@ red , similar to that of Liverpool , who made a similar change at around the same time . This arrangement has continued to the present day , with several variations in design , in common with most senior clubs as the replica shirt market has expanded . In the late 1970s an Admiral strip featured five vertical white stripes on the left side of the shirt and shorts , and the early 1980s shirts ? as worn at the 1983 European Cup Winners Cup final ? featured white vertical pinstripes . Later design changes included significant amounts of blue , and a one season reversion to white shorts , although the all @-@ red scheme returned in 1997 . For the 2012 ? 13 season , Aberdeen once again reverted to wearing white shorts . In 2013 ? 14 , the all @-@ red kit was reintroduced .

Shirt sponsorship began in 1987, and the initial shirt sponsor was JVC. Since then, with the club making fewer appearances on the international stage, shirt sponsors have tended to be local to Aberdeen? they have included one of the local commercial radio stations, Northsound, as well as several Aberdeen @-@ based oil service companies. The current shirt sponsor is Saltire Energy.

Away colours have tended to be either white? often with black shorts? or a combination of yellow and black, referring back to the black and gold strips of the pre @-@ war era, although for a time in the 1970s, Aberdeen sported an all @-@ blue change strip with white socks. For the 2007? 08 season, the change strip was all @-@ white, with a third kit of yellow and black halves available if needed for European games, or in the event of a clash involving both red and white.

The club did not have an official crest before 1972, but several variations on the letters AFC had from time to time featured on the shirt, usually in some kind of cursive font. In November 1972, the club unveiled an official crest or logo, designed by Aberdonian graphic designer Donald Addison. The design represented a capital letter A as the side view of a football goal, with a ball forming the crossbar of the letter. This ball was crosshatched in such a way as to depict it as being inside the net, signifying the scoring of a goal. The logo was completed by the letters FC in smaller type at a level with the ball element. This badge was used on the shirts from around 1978, with no significant alterations until the mid @-@ 1980s when the words " Aberdeen Football Club " were added in a circular border, and the date of the club 's founding, 1903, was added under the goal element. The current version of the crest, which retains these elements in a unified design, was introduced at the start of the 1997? 98 season. Two stars signifying the winning of the two European trophies in 1983 were introduced over the badge in the 2005? 06 season.

= = = Kit manufacturers and shirt sponsors = = =

= = Stadium = =

Aberdeen have played throughout their existence at Pittodrie Stadium, the name of which comes from the Pictish for " place of manure " . The ground was first used by the original Aberdeen F.C. in 1899, in a 7 ? 1 win over Dumbarton; when they merged with two other teams in 1903, the new club took over the old Aberdeen ground. On 15 August 1903, 8 @,@ 000 spectators turned up to watch the new Aberdeen draw 1 ? 1 against Stenhousemuir, the first game played at Pittodrie by its amalgamated tenants. The club initially rented the ground, but subsequently bought it in 1920. The stadium currently seats 20 @,@ 961. The record attendance is 45 @,@ 061, during a Scottish Cup match between Aberdeen and Hearts on 13 March 1954.

The stadium consists of four stands: the Main Stand, which also houses the club offices and players facilities; the Merkland Road Family Stand; the South Stand, which is opposite the main stand and holds the largest amount of spectators; and the Richard Donald stand to the east, which was completed in 1993, contains hospitality suites, and is named after former chairman Dick Donald. A quarter of the South Stand is used to accommodate travelling supporters. In 1978, Pittodrie became the first all covered, all @-@ seater stadium in Britain.

= = = New Aberdeen Stadium = = =

Since 2009, Aberdeen has been examining a move to a new stadium. Plans for a new stadium began when the club indicated that further development of Pittodrie Stadium was not possible due to the age of the ground and the restrictions from surrounding land. Aberdeen City Council approved an initial project in May 2009, to be situated near Loirston Loch in the south of the city, subject to planning permission. In August 2010, a planning application for the new stadium was submitted to the council, which was approved the following February.

The move was delayed by a year in May 2012 due to problems with land ownership , and suffered a serious setback the following August , when the council rejected a joint application by Aberdeen F.C. and Cove Rangers to build a community sports centre at nearby Calder Park . Aberdeen announced in November 2014 new plans to instead build training facilities at Balgownie , on land owned by the University of Aberdeen , but the project was ultimately scrapped in the following July . Plans to develop a new stadium and training facilities near Westhill , close to the newly developed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route , were announced in May 2016 . The site 's training facilities are scheduled to be operational by 2018 , while the stadium could be ready ahead of the 2019 ? 20 season . The new stadium is expected to have a similar capacity to Pittodrie Stadium .

= = Supporters and nicknames = =

= = = Supporters = = =

Aberdeen 's supporters , known as the Red Army , are listed in the team squad list as wearing the number 12 shirt . In 1999 , a group of supporters founded the Red Ultras group with the express aim of improving the atmosphere at Pittodrie . However , it was decided that this particular group was to disband at the beginning of 2010 . Organised chants and choreography still take place in ' centre block ' of the top tier of the Richard Donald Stand and Aberdeen fans still do choreographies at home and away games .

Aberdeen are the only senior team in the third largest city in Scotland, a city which is relatively remote, geographically, from other large population centres, and as a result have a large catchment area of potential supporters. The average attendance in the 2015? 16 Scottish Premiership is currently 13 @,@ 530.

In the 1980s , a minority of the club 's supporters had a reputation as one of Britain 's most prominent casuals groups , the Aberdeen Soccer Casuals . The rise of the Aberdeen Casuals coincided with the most successful period in the club 's history , and has been chronicled in more than one published account . Whilst numbers have steadily declined with the introduction of Football Banning Orders preventing hooligans from travelling to games , the Aberdeen Casuals still appear at big fixtures often away from home and in the UEFA Europa League . There were clashes at both fixtures against FC Groningen in 2014 , as well as 13 arrests after violent clashes with Dundee United fans at a game in December 2015 .

= = = Rivalries = = =

Aberdeen have rarely played in the same division as their geographically closest rivals: Peterhead, Brechin City, Montrose, Arbroath, Elgin City, and Forfar Athletic, so rivalries have tended to come from further afield. Currently, Aberdeen have a minor rivalry with Inverness Caley Thistle, due to the fact both Aberdeen and Inverness are the two largest settlements in the north of Scotland. This is known as the North derby and has arisen since Inverness were first promoted to the SPL in 2004.

In the early 1980s , owing to the success both domestically and in Europe of Aberdeen and Dundee United , the pair were known as the New Firm . However , Dundee United have their city neighbours Dundee as close rivals , and the antagonism was not always reciprocated to the same degree . The same situation applies to Aberdeen 's rivalry with Rangers , in that Rangers have their own much older and well @-@ known Old Firm rivalry with Celtic . Aberdeen 's rivalry with Rangers arose after a number of incidents in matches between the two clubs in the 1980s , namely Willie Johnston 's stamp on John McMaster 's neck in the Scottish League Cup and Neil Simpson 's tackle on Ian Durrant in 1988 , as well as Aberdeen 's dominance in Scottish football throughout the decade . There are still often violent clashes between both sets of supporters within and outwith the stadium to this day .

Since Aberdeen 's re @-@ emergence as one of the top teams in Scotland , Aberdeen 's rivalry with Celtic has increased both competitively and between supporters . There have been minor incidents at games , mainly relating to political disturbances by Celtic supporters at games between the clubs , including the disruption of minute 's silences and the display of banners showing support for the 1981 Irish hunger strike .

= = = Nicknames = = =

Aberdeen are known as "The Dons", a name that has been in use since at least 1913. The origin of this nickname is unclear. One theory is that it derives from the word "don "meaning "teacher", given Aberdeen 's history as a university town. It may also be a reference to the nearby River Don, or a contraction of "Aberdonians". Before the popular adoption of "The Dons", the team were variously known as "The Wasps" or "The Black and Golds", both names a reference to the yellow

and black striped shirts of the time . As with many teams that play in red , Aberdeen may also be called " The Reds " , and are referred to by some supporters as " The Dandy Dons " or " The Dandies " .

Rival clubs occasionally refer to Aberdeen " The Sheep " and their supporters " The Sheep Shaggers ". The term was eventually accepted by the club after Aberdeen fans started singing " the sheep are on fire " at games . The song was originally sung by away fans poking fun at an Aberdeen fan set on fire by on a train in a homemade sheep costume . This in turn led to specialised merchandise being sold by the club and local businesses .

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= = Honours = =
= = = Domestic = = =
Scottish League
Champions (4): 1954? 55, 1979? 80, 1983? 84, 1984? 85
Runners @-@ up (15): 1910? 11, 1936? 37, 1955? 56, 1970? 71, 1971? 72, 1977? 78,
1980 ? 81 , 1981 ? 82 , 1988 ? 89 , 1989 ? 90 , 1990 ? 91 , 1992 ? 93 , 1993 ? 94 , 2014 ? 15 ,
2015 @-@ 16
Scottish Cup
Winners (7): 1946 ? 47, 1969 ? 70, 1981 ? 82, 1982 ? 83, 1983 ? 84, 1985 ? 86, 1989 ? 90
Runners @-@ up (8): 1936? 37, 1952? 53, 1953? 54, 1958? 59, 1966? 67, 1977? 78,
1992 ? 93 , 1999 ? 00
Scottish League Cup
Winners (6): 1955? 56, 1976? 77, 1985? 86, 1989? 90, 1995? 96, 2013? 14
Runners @-@ up (7): 1946? 47, 1978? 79, 1979? 80, 1987? 88, 1988? 89, 1992? 93,
1999 ? 00
= = = European = = =
UEFA Cup Winners 'Cup
Winners (1): 1982 ? 83
UEFA Super Cup
Winners (1): 1983
= = = UEFA Ranking = = =
As of 28 June 2016
= = Club officials = =
= = Players = =
= = = Current squad = = =
As of 19 July 2016
Note: Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules. Players may hold more
than one non @-@ FIFA nationality.
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= = = Out on loan = = =

Note: Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules. Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality.

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= = = Notable players = = =
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Hall of Fame

Aberdeen inaugurated a Hall of Fame as part of the club 's centenary celebrations in 2003. Six players were inducted following the initial dinner in March 2004, and a further six were included in November 2004. Ex @-@ manager Alex Ferguson was inducted at a re @-@ launch event in November 2015.

Greatest ever team

In November 2015, supporters cast votes to determine the greatest ever Aberdeen team.

Jim Leighton (1977?88, 1997?2000)

Stuart Kennedy (1976 ? 83)

Willie Miller (1972 ? 90)

Alex McLeish (1978?94)

Russell Anderson (1996?2007, 2012?15)

Gordon Strachan (1977?84)

Eoin Jess (1987?96, 1997?2001)

Jim Bett (1985?94)

Neil Simpson (1980?90)

Joe Harper (1969 ? 72)

Duncan Shearer (1992 ? 97)

= = Records = =

= = = Individual = = =

All players are from Scotland unless otherwise stated.

= = Managers = =

List of full @-@ time managers, as of 16 December 2015. Only competitive matches are counted. Caretaker managers are not listed.