

I was manager of Falkirk and we had a chance to regain our position at the top of the league table when league leaders Partick visited Brockville. Just over 5,000 turned up and they were treated to a cracking game. Wee Crunchie had us two up at the break but the Jags scored twice late on to earn a draw. Kevin's first goal was unique, a rare headed goal from probably the smallest man on the park, although his second was trademark Crunchie, as he rounded a couple of defenders before firing home. He definitely deserved to be on the winning side that day.

Over at Ibrox, there had been change and Jock Wallace was named as the new manager – and the bookies were tipping yours truly to replace him at Fir Park, which was something of a compliment. Mind you, St Johnstone boss Alex Rennie was also in the frame. For me, though, it was business as usual and I was just determined to get the Bairns back on top of the table, although Partick were making it very difficult. Things were going well and our gates had improved dramatically, rising from something like 800 to 2,500. It helped that we were winning regularly but I also like to think that our supporters were encouraged by the brand of football we were playing.

Obviously someone noticed, and all of a sudden I was in demand. I had only ever met Jock Wallace once, when I was after a player he had at Fir Park. I quite fancied the big boy Bruce Clelland and Jock invited me through to Fir Park and I was 10 minutes in his company.

Then, on the 11th of November, 1983, at 8am, the phone rang at home and my wife answered it. She didn't recognise the voice. I took the receiver, 'Jock Wallace here son, how would you like to come to Rangers and be my assistant?' The call came right out of the blue. He told me he was going to Aberdeen the following day for his first game and that he would call me on the Monday. I was told to keep it quiet – which, as you can imagine, was tough. Mind you, that didn't stop me telling my dad – and it was one of the best feelings I'd ever had, as he was a big Rangers man. When I told him, his face lit up and that made me so happy. In fact, to this day, every time I pass my mum and dad's house, I always think back to the moment I walked through the front door to tell him I had been offered the job. That moment will never leave me.

We were playing Clyde and went to the Dutch Inn for our usual pre-match meal. We were all sitting there tucking in, and I simply couldn't believe the secret I was keeping, and then who comes on the television, on the football preview show Saint & Greavsie, but big Jock, and I'm thinking, no one knows that he phoned me yesterday.

After the game against Clyde, our chairman asked me up to the office and I started thinking, 'what does he know?' But he said, 'Motherwell have been on the phone, they want to interview you about the vacant gaffer's job.' I thought it was only manners so I went through to a Coatbridge hotel on the Monday night and met Mr Livingstone, the chairman, and about six other people, and he said, 'Alex, we want to offer you a five-year contract. We've had so many managers here recently, between Jock Wallace, Davie Hay, Roger Hynd and Ally McLeod, that we're now looking for a bit of stability.'

It was a great contract and so different from anything I had known before in football. There was a five-year deal on the table and magnificent money and, of course, the chance to manage a full-time premier league outfit. It was very tempting. I'd had other offers before that. Dunfermline had tried to persuade me to go back, twice, in fact, and I was tempted, because of the good memories I had of the place, but when the call came from Jock, even the Motherwell offer, good as it was, had to be pushed aside. I told them I would call them on Wednesday, and when I phoned them back, I said, 'I really appreciate the offer but I have to turn it down and you'll find out why in the next couple of days.' I had decided to take the job at Ibrox, but before I left Falkirk there was one last function I had to perform. I didn't have a contract with the Bairns, and because of the tremendous feelings I had for the club, I didn't want to see them miss out on compensation from Rangers, so I asked the chairman to draw one up, which meant they would get a few quid for me. I thought it was the right thing to do. I told Mr Moffat that if I didn't go to either club, and decided to stay at Falkirk, then I would rip up the contract and continue as normal, and he seemed happy with that. Mr Moffat was speaking to Campbell Ogilvie and Rae Simpson at Rangers to try and get as much money as possible so it dragged on for quite a while. It got resolved eventually but I still don't know to this day how much they got.

Mind you, there was a point when I said to the chairman, 'Surely, you can't stop me going to Ibrox, it's a great opportunity,' but he assured me he wasn't, and that he just wanted to make sure Falkirk were properly compensated.

Going to Rangers was weird, and people definitely reacted differently around me. Just after I moved to Ibrox, Jessie and I went out for a meal with a few friends, one of whom was a big Rangers man. I'll never forget being in the restaurant that night and the guy in question just staring at me all night. It was strange, but Rangers definitely does have an incredible effect on people.

My time as manager of Falkirk had been short lived, but very successful, and I left the club on a sound footing, which gave me a lot of pleasure. Falkirk were still 'my team' but I was now an employee of Rangers Football Club – and that felt very good indeed.