

Rangers limbered up for season 1921/22 by taking part in the five-a-side competition at the Glasgow Police Sports Day at Ibrox and, as usual, swept all before them. The fives competitions were a great way for the players to shake off the close-season cobwebs and at the cops' big day, the Light Blues were represented by McKenna, Lawson, Meiklejohn, Morton and McDiarmid.

The following Friday, there were scenes of pandemonium as the club put their season tickets on sale at sports shop, Lumley's, in Sauchiehall Street. The store was besieged by fans desperate to get their hands on one of the limited briefs, but with only 200 tickets on sale – advertised at between 10am and 6pm – the moment the doors opened, shop staff were besieged by more than 400 supporters. The store was forced to open at 9am to ease congestion outside.

Tickets for the ground and stand were on sale at 25 shillings (£1.25) but when shop staff announced that just thirty were left, the crowd rushed the shop and tried to get upstairs to secure one, but only succeeded in smashing a glass counter and causing havoc in the store.

That night, between 7pm and 9pm, a further 500 were up for grabs at the Ibrox ticket office, and by 4pm, large crowds had started to form outside. When the office opened, 1,000 people were outside, and within 20 minutes, every available membership card had been snapped up. That night, manager Bill Struth, joyful at this ringing endorsement from supporters, signed goal-keeper William Gould from Queen's Park.

Rangers entered a team for the Clyde Sports Day and once again the all-conquering Gers came up trumps. A 2-0 win over Motherwell set up an 'Old Firm' semi and Meiklejohn bagged the only goal of the game to send the Gers into the final, where they beat Hamilton Accies, again 1-0. It was a great confidence booster ahead of the new season. And when they repeated the feat a week later at the Ibrox Sports Day, albeit with a single goal win over Celtic in the final, the set was complete. On this occasion, it was recorded that 'The Old Firm fought as though the Scottish Cup was at stake'. The winners received handsome ladies gold watches.

A strange incident took place during the match. Celtic's Joe Cassidy thumped Meiklejohn before scoring, a goal which the referee correctly disallowed, but the Ranger was forced to leave the pitch as a consequence. In a true show of sportsmanship, Celtic's Patsy Gallagher offered to go off to even up the numbers but the referee wouldn't allow him.

Late in the second period of extra time, a mistake by a Celtic back proved costly and Sandy Archibald ran off to score the only goal of a game that was described, the Gallagher incident apart, as the 'most thrilling and needly final of fives ever seen'. The Rangers players were no doubt relieved to hear the full-time gun!

Celtic had an opportunity for revenge when they hosted their own sports day just a couple of days before the opening league fixtures – but somehow it didn't pan out that way. Rangers were represented by McKenna, Meiklejohn, Cunningham, Muirhead and Archibald and after beating Clyde (3-1) and Partick Thistle (3-0), the scene was set for another Old Firm final. This time though, there was to be no dubiety about the score as ruthless Rangers crushed their foes 5-1, with goals from Cunningham (3) and a double by Archibald. As a result of their endeavour, the Gers players were presented with 'handsome' clocks!

It was a buoyant Rangers that went into the first league game of the season against Third Lanark at Cathkin Park and a 3-1 win was followed by a sound 7-1 thrashing of Clydebank, a game Meiklejohn missed due to the after effects of a knock suffered in the fives at Celtic Park. 'Jock' Nicholson proved an able deputy. But the talented wing half was in line to return for the visit of Motherwell and took part in a friendly match at Ardencaple Park, against Helensburgh, in the midweek prior to the match. The players enjoyed a pleasant sail 'doon the watter' before playing a round of golf. Right back Billy McCandless was forced to miss the Helensburgh trip as his mum took ill in Northern Ireland. Sadly, she passed away while he was heading for the province.

With hardly a ball kicked in anger, Meiklejohn picked up his first representative recognition when he was named in the Glasgow team to face Sheffield in the annual inter-city match which was scheduled for the Steel City. In the 1920s, selectors named their team well in advance, rather than a squad, and subsequent withdrawals were catered for if and when required. Meik was joined in the team by fellow Ger Bob McDiarmid.

Meanwhile, Rangers set yet another new attendance record when they travelled to Paisley to face St Mirren. A crowd of 35,290 squeezed into Love Street to see Rangers win 2-1, but the victory was once again marred by crowd trouble, with the fighting played out by the notorious brakesmen. Battling supporters spilled onto the pitch and the game was held up until order was restored. Saints directors immediately banned brake club paraphernalia. Third Lanark and Queen's Park followed suit as the menace of the brakesmen was rapidly becoming a thorny issue for football clubs and the national association. And there was more violence the following weekend when trouble erupted at the Old Firm RESERVE match.