

Macari goes ahead with case against Celtic

The Scotsman 17/02/1997

MARTIN HANNAN

CELTIC Football Club and its former manager, Lou Macari, will contest a near million pound court case starting in Edinburgh tomorrow.

The Celtic chairman, Fergus McCann, and his board face a claim for 431,000 for alleged breach of contract from Macari, a former Celtic player, who was sacked in June 1994.

In return Celtic are claiming a sum of around 250,000 in damages from Macari, now the manager of Stoke City, for alleged mismanagement of the team during his eight months as Celtic's manager.

The Court of Session in Edinburgh has set aside a month for the proof - a civil hearing in front of a judge - and a legal expert estimated the costs of the action at "upwards of 250,000".

Witnesses are expected to include top Celtic personnel and former directors of the club, as well as Celtic players past and present. Also likely to be called are several expert witnesses testifying in Macari's favour, including at least one serving team manager.

The witnesses will include some of the central figures involved in the lengthy and stormy takeover battle for Celtic in the early 1990s, which ended with Mr McCann buying over the club from its then shareholders.

Mr McCann has since successfully improved Celtic's finances, and the club won its first trophy for six years with the 1995 Scottish Cup.

After a successful public flotation, Celtic is reckoned to have the largest capitalisation of any British football club.

One of the major issues in the court case is likely to be Macari's trip to the US in 1994, during which he claims he found out about his sacking from the press. The club are expected to raise the issue of his family not moving from his former home in Stoke.

Appearing for Mr Macari, the former Celtic and Manchester United player capped 24 times for Scotland, will be senior counsel, Colin Boyd, QC, along with junior counsel, Leonard Wallace.

Neither Mr Macari nor his solicitor, James Keegan, would make any comment yesterday. Although there was no reply to The Scotsman's calls to Celtic last night, the club have made known their determination to contest Mr Macari's claims.

Macari 'warned over absences'

The Scotsman 19/02/1997

JOHN ROBERTSON Law Correspondent

FORMER Celtic manager Lou Macari was sent a letter warning him about his poor attendance record before he was sacked, a court heard yesterday.

Fergus McCann, the club's managing director, told a judge: "I became very worried that he was not available on a regular basis. He was either away supposedly scouting or perhaps had gone off home to Stoke."

He was speaking at the Court of Session, Edinburgh where Mr Macari is claiming 431,000 damages for his sacking in 1994 with two years of his contract still to go.

Celtic says the dismissal, after only eight months in the 150,000-a-year job, was justified because Mr Macari had failed to perform his duties and breached his contract and is counter-claiming 250,000 -the compensation paid to Stoke City when he moved to Parkhead in October 1993. Since leaving Celtic, he has returned to Stoke as manager.

The court was told that Mr Macari had been given the manager's post before Mr McCann took control at Celtic Park. Mr McCann denied any predisposition to see the former Celtic and Scotland player out the door. "I had not appointed him but I certainly wanted to give him every opportunity to do the job well and every encouragement and every assistance in order to do so," he said.

Senior players - Mr McCann could not remember precisely who, but thought they were Paul McStay, Pat Bonner, Charlie Nicholas and Peter Grant -complained they had little confidence in the manager.

Another concern had been that Mr Macari's family home was still in Stoke. He rented a house near Glasgow but spent long spells away from Parkhead, Celtic's ground.

Three weeks after taking control and with the authority of the board, Mr McCann sent Mr Macari a warning letter, stating that concern had been raised over his level of commitment.

The item of greatest concern had been Mr Macari's failure to establish a home in the Glasgow area. He appeared on average to be spending only three days a week with the team.

"It was apparent he was not residing permanently in Scotland but was only visiting Scotland," said Mr McCann. "We felt it was critical to the performance of his job that he make a full-time home in Glasgow. It seemed to me he was not paying attention to business."

The letter had also referred to two waitresses from the club's catering department being on the team bus during a trip to Ireland. The board, said Mr McCann, had been appalled to learn of the incident.

On another occasion, a player had been seen drinking alcohol from a can on the team bus returning from a match. Celtic players had a high public profile and that was not the sort of example they wanted to set.

Mr Macari had not been there and the letter had made it clear to the manager that it was up to him to provide supervision so there was no repeat.

Mr McCann said: "Football players, as one manager told me, do not do what they are asked ... they do as they are told."

The letter had constituted a written warning that failure by Mr Macari to remedy the issues raised would be deemed a breach of his contract.

"The purpose was to send Mr Macari a very strong signal that he must get his act together.... It was to try to get the manager straightened out about what was expected of him."

The hearing continues.

Fergus blows whistle on Lou

Daily Record 19/02/1997

GORDON McILWRAITH

Celtic chairman Fergus McCann yesterday ripped former club boss Lou Macari to shreds.

McCann blasted him for being an absent manager.

And the Court of Session in Edinburgh also heard how:

Top players complained about Macari's ability.

A Celtic player drank booze on a bus returning from a game.

Two club waitresses travelled with the team to a friendly match.

Macari's whereabouts were often unknown.

And team morale under him was "low and sank even further".

The claims were made on the first day of a legal clash between Celtic and Macari.

McCann, 55, told the court: "I had not appointed him, but I certainly wanted to give him every opportunity to do the job well and every encouragement and assistance to do so."

However, a major concern to the club was that Macari's family still lived in Stoke while he rented a house near Glasgow.

The result was Macari spent long spells away from Parkhead which McCann said he regarded as unacceptable.

He added: "I became very worried that he was not available on a regular basis.

"He was either away supposedly scouting or perhaps had gone off home to Stoke and frequently could only be reached by phone.

"It was apparent he was not residing permanently in Scotland but was only visiting Scotland.

"It seemed to me he was not paying attention to business. We felt it was critical to the performance of his job that he make a full-time home in Glasgow.

"He had to be at Celtic Park virtually all his time unless he had good reason to be elsewhere as part of his job."

He added: "I had a discussion with him about team discipline as I had had complaints about a trip to Ireland just at the time of my arrival.

"I believe there was an occasion when a player was drinking beer on the team bus returning from a match. I think Mr Macari had not been travelling on the bus as expected."

Top players also approached him to say they had little confidence in Macari. McCann said the board had been appalled to learn that two waitresses from the catering department had been on the team bus during a trip to Ireland.

On March 25, 1994, McCann sent a warning letter to Macari about concern that had been raised over his level of commitment to the club and its players.

The letter stated it was important that the club should have a strong and disciplined leadership setting the standard for the team.

McCann claimed one of the issues raised was Macari's home still being in Stoke.

He said: "The purpose was to send Mr Macari a very strong signal that he must get his act together and meet his responsibilities. He added: "I do not remember why it was sent to Stoke but perhaps it was the most likely place to be received by Mr Macari."

McCann wrote again to Macari in early June warning him he was in breach of his contract about his failure to supervise the team.

The letter went on: "Your other major problems appear to be an inability or unwillingness to communicate with others and attend to timeous matters.

"Lack of clear or proper instruction to staff is resulting in last minute panics, which creates an impression of inefficiency or incompetence.

"The staff are not working as a team and the poor attendance at **Celtic** Park by you and your staff is clearly causing resentment and contributing to the lack of team spirit and an inevitable lack of respect."

Macari was sacked in June 1994 after eight months and is suing the club for pounds 431,000.

Macari, now back in charge at Stoke City, claims the club breached his contract, which required them to give two years' notice of dismissal and that he wasn't to be fired in the first year.

But the club claim they were entitled to get rid of him because of his poor performance.

And they have hit back with a pounds 250,000 counter claim - the price they paid Stoke in compensation to get Macari just six months before McCann took over.

The hearing continues.

STARS ON THE ATTACK

Four top **Celtic** stars told new club chairman Fergus McCann they had no confidence in Lou Macari as manager.

Paul McStay, Charlie Nicholas, Pat Bonner and Peter Grant approached him.

McCann told The Court of Session in Edinburgh: "As I recall it the main concern was that they were not being communicated with by the manager.

"He was not giving tactical instruction, not around for training, would arrive at the last minute before a match and would give no team talk or preparation.

"They felt he had a very low opinion of the players.

"There was a feeling they were not being given the direction and supervision they would normally expect from a manager."

McCann says Macari was sacked after letter insult

The Scotsman 20/02/1997

JOHN ROBERTSON Law Correspondent

A COURT heard yesterday how Lou Macari had been sacked as **Celtic**'s manager after he made a "barefaced" insult to the club and its managing director, Fergus McCann.

He was dismissed during a telephone call to Manchester Airport before flying to the World Cup in the US, a judge was told. The previous day, Mr Macari had faxed an "aggressive and impolite" letter to Mr McCann, demanding to be allowed to get on with his job without obstacles being put in his way.

Mr McCann told the Court of Session: "He was basically saying, 'I'm not going to do anything you tell me, I'm going to do it my way and you can like it or lump it.' I think this clearly is a barefaced insult to me personally and to the club as a whole."

Mr Macari had been appointed manager before Mr McCann took control at Parkhead but the managing director denied orchestrating an elaborate campaign to have him removed from the post.

The former **Celtic** and Scotland player is claiming 431,000 damages over his sacking in June 1994. He had completed only eight months of a three-year contract. **Celtic** says Mr Macari breached his contract and is counter-claiming 250,000 -the compensation **Celtic** paid Stoke City when he moved to Parkhead in October 1993.

In his evidence, Mr McCann complained of long spells when the manager was away from **Celtic** Park. He had failed to set up a permanent home in Glasgow and often went to Stoke to visit his family.

"I think Mr Macari felt a manager was a kind of freelance operator that could go from football match to football match without taking charge of the actual operation within a club. I was trying very hard for him to get the message - he had to do the job he was being paid to do."

A letter had been written to Mr Macari on 10 June in a final attempt to get him to understand what was required of him. In his reply, which Mr McCann described as "aggressive and impolite", Mr Macari had accused the managing director of having a total lack of knowledge and understanding of the role of a football team manager.

He had added: "I suggest that you let me get on with the job I was employed to do. Perhaps a period of reflection whilst I am away (at the World Cup) will assist you in seeing matters in a clearer perspective so that on my return you will see fit to allow me to get on with my task of rebuilding the team and coaching it to success without placing obstacles in my way."

Mr McCann said the letter amounted to a complete rejection of his authority and that of the board of directors. It was an unacceptable attitude.

"The idea of being a free spirit that could come and go occasionally is not, by any definition, the role of a football manager of a major football club.

"It had become quite clear from the letter and the behaviour he was exhibiting that he was not interested in taking instructions or following directions from me.

"I am paying this man 150,000 a year to do a job and expecting him to do it well and part of that job is to follow directions."

Without meeting any dissent from other board members, Mr McCann had sacked Mr Macari on the phone after tracking him down to Manchester Airport.

"We basically had reached an impossible stage. There was obviously nowhere to go. He was making no attempt to say, 'Let's sit down and see if we can work together.' He really put me in a position of having to take action."

Mr McCann said that although **Celtic** had failed that season to qualify for Europe for the first time in 20 years, the team's performance and Mr Macari's dismissal were not connected.

"I knew quite well that a lot of improvements had to be made and it was not an overnight task."

The hearing continues.

YOU DON'T HAVE A CLUE

Daily Record 20/02/1997

GORDON McILWRAITH

Celtic manager Lou Macari was fired hours after telling his boss Fergus McCann: "You don't have a clue about my job."

McCann told a court yesterday he phoned Macari at an AIRPORT and sacked him before he jetted off on holiday.

He said the fax was a "bare-faced insult".

Macari is suing **Celtic** for pounds 431,000 over his sacking.

He was booted after rows with McCann, who was angry at the amount of time he spent away from **Celtic** Park.

McCann told the Court of Session yesterday: "I think he felt a manager was a kind of freelance operator who could go from match to match without taking charge of the actual operation."

Macari sent the fax on June 14 1994, after the club sent him two warning letters.

In it, he told McCann: "Your remarks demonstrate a total lack of knowledge of the role of team manager.

"It is not a Monday to Friday, nine to five job.

"Whilst I acknowledge your motives are the same as mine - to restore **Celtic** to its position as the premier side in Scotland and a force in Europe - I suggest you let me get on with the job I was employed to do."

He added that he hoped McCann would leave him to work "without placing obstacles in my way".

McCann, giving evidence for the second day, said the remark about "obstacles" was "a bare-faced insult to me and to the club as a whole".

He added: "He is saying 'I am going to do it my way and you can like it or lump it.'"

"It had become clear he wasn't interested in taking instructions from me.

"I am paying this man pounds 150,000 a year to do a job. Part of that job is to follow directions."

McCann sacked Macari in a phone call to Manchester Airport, where he was about to fly out to the World Cup in the USA. He told the court he felt "very badly" about the way the manager's eight-month reign ended.

McCann also said he was dismayed about the way Macari gave free transfers to fans' favourites Charlie Nicholas and Pat Bonner.

He claimed their departure wasn't handled "in a proper and honourable fashion", and said it reflected badly on the club that their roles weren't properly recognised.

Celtic have lodged a counter-claim against Macari for pounds 250,000 - the amount they paid his former club Stoke City in compensation after employing him.

Macari is now back at Stoke. The case continues.

Celtic chief grilled over claims

The Scotsman 21/02/1997

JOHN ROBERTSON

THE **Celtic** managing director, Fergus McCann, was grilled yesterday over his claim that senior players had expressed a lack of confidence in the club's former manager, Lou Macari.

At the Court of Session, Mr McCann denied that after taking control at **Celtic** Park in March, 1994, he had failed to quash speculation about Mr Macari's future in the hope that he would take the hint and quit.

In evidence to Lady Cosgrove, Mr McCann had said that senior players had complained that they had little confidence in Mr Macari. He could not remember who, but he thought they were Paul McStay, Pat Bonner, Charlie Nicholas and Peter Grant.

In cross-examination, Colin Boyd, QC, for Mr Macari, asked yesterday if the meeting ever took place. Mr McCann replied: "Yes, I did not make it up."

Mr Boyd said: "Let me suggest that there was no meeting between you and the players at which they expressed lack of confidence."

Mr McCann said: "I got that message loud and clear from the players." He conceded that he could not be clear about the timing of the meeting or which players were involved.

Questioned about press reports that had speculated about Mr Macari's future after Mr McCann took control at the club, the managing director said he had not allowed "a situation of insecurity" to hang over the manager. Had he not let that situation continue in the hope that Mr Macari would take the hint and take himself off? "Absolutely not."

Mr McCann added: "I cannot recall saying, 'You are going to be here for ever.' But I am pretty sure I told him I was behind him and wanted to work with him."

The manager's contract had been raised at a board meeting soon after the takeover and Mr Boyd suggested a reasonable interpretation was that the raising of the issue had been in connection with the club's obligations, were the contract to be terminated.

Mr McCann said: "That is not a reasonable assumption. I don't remember any such connection being put forward. There was no intention to sack Mr Macari at that stage."

Mr Macari was sacked from the 150,000-a-year post in June, 1994, after completing only eight months of a three-year contract. He is claiming 431,000 damages for lost wages, bonuses and other benefits. **Celtic** has counter-claimed for 250,000, the sum paid to Stoke City where he was manager before moving to **Celtic**. The hearing continues.

Fergus: I didn't invent player protest

Daily Record 21/02/1997

Celtic owner Fergus McCann yesterday denied inventing a player protest about Lou Macari.

He had claimed a group of stars, including Paul McStay and Charlie Nicholas, told him they lacked confidence in the manager.

During a clash at the Court of Session with Macari's QC, Colin Boyd, McCann said: "I did not make it up. I got that message loud and clear from the players."

And he denied failing to quash speculation about Macari's future in the hope he would take the hint and quit.

The former **Celtic** team boss is suing the club for pounds 431,000 over his sacking.

But the club have countered with a pounds 250,000 claim against Macari - the amount they paid Stoke City in compensation for bringing him to Parkhead.

McCann conceded he wasn't clear about the timing of the meeting with the players - but was adamant it took place.

Later he told the court: "On at least one occasion I made it clear to Mr Macari I wanted to work with him closely."

"I told him it was important we worked together and tried to get the club back on its feet."

The hearing continues.

McCann: I didn't call Lou low-life

Daily Record 22/02/1997

Celtic supremo Fergus McCann yesterday denied branding sacked manager Lou Macari "low-life".

The accusation was put to McCann by Macari's counsel at the Court of Session.

But the **Celtic** MD said it wasn't true.

And he even praised the man he sacked. McCann said: "Given the effort, he had a great deal of talent to bring to the club."

McCann was giving evidence on the fourth day of Macari's pounds 431,000 damages action against **Celtic**.

The Parkhead chief spelled out yesterday why he sacked Macari on June 14, 1994.

He told the court he'd received a letter from Macari, which accused him of putting obstacles in the manager's way.

It also asked McCann to "allow me to get on with my task of rebuilding the team and coaching it to success".

McCann told Macari's QC, Colin Boyd: "His letter basically said 'Go to Hell'. I was very, very angry."

He claimed Macari said he would have five new players signed before leaving for a holiday at the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

McCann told the court: "At that time, I had his letter."

"I then tried to talk to him and found he had countermanded my instructions and was on his way to go on holiday."

"I felt quite let down. He was on his way, so I really had no choice."

Macari was at Manchester Airport ready to fly out when he was sacked over the phone by the Parkhead MD.

Macari alleges McCann constantly questioned his judgment on transfers and didn't tell him money was available to buy players.

The hearing continues.

McCann ditches Lou claim

Daily Record 26/02/1997

Celtic chairman Fergus McCann pulled out of a legal tackle with ex-boss Lou Macari yesterday to avoid naming names.

He had been challenged to identify a mystery man approached by the club BEFORE Tommy Burns was poached from Kilmarnock.

Macari is suing the club for pounds 431,000 over his sacking.

But the Court of Session heard because approaches were made in confidence **Celtic** wanted to delete a pounds 150,000 claim against Macari to avoid names.

Celtic's pounds 250,000 counter-claim against Macari - the amount they paid Stoke in compensation to get him - still remains.

The hearing continues.

Celtic players 'brought women back to hotel'

The Scotsman 27/02/1997

JOHN ROBERTSON Law Correspondent

A COURT heard yesterday how **Celtic** players had broken an unwritten rule of football by taking women back to the team's hotel. The players had been left by the manager, Lou Macari, and returned with female friends after a night out on the town, a judge was told.

The former **Celtic** director, Tom Grant, recalled the incident during evidence at the Court of Session where Mr Macari is claiming 431,000 damages over his sacking in 1994. **Celtic** insists the dismissal was justified and is counter-claiming 250,000 from Mr Macari, the sum paid to Stoke City when he moved to **Celtic** Park.

Mr Grant was questioned about the trip to Manchester a few weeks before Mr Macari's sacking. **Celtic** had played Manchester United in a testimonial match for Mark Hughes, then a United player.

He said that after the game, the **Celtic** players had been left with what appeared to be little or no supervision. "A number of them, as players would do, took off into town to enjoy themselves."

He had no problem with that, but he added: "I do not think they should be bringing that enjoyment back to the team's hotel. I believe there is an unwritten rule of football that you do not bring your enjoyment back to the team's hotel."

He explained: "Some of the younger players in particular chose to bring some female friends back to the hotel."

Colin Boyd, QC, for Mr Macari, asked if Mr Grant had drawn the matter to the manager's attention. He replied: "No, he was not there to tell."

Mr Grant accepted that he or other senior members of the **Celtic** party could have raised the issue with the players but had not done so.

He told Matthew Clarke, QC, for **Celtic**, that to his knowledge everyone in the party apart from Mr Macari had spent the night in the hotel. He had never been given any explanation for the manager's absence.

Mr Clarke asked: "Had he let it been known before departing that he was not going to be resident in the hotel overnight and that you or somebody else would be responsible?"

Mr Grant replied: "No."
The hearing continues.

Celts took girls back to team hotel

Daily Record 27/02/1997

Celtic players took girls back to the team's hotel after a match when Lou Macari was club manager, a court heard yesterday.

The shock claim was made by former Parkhead director Tom Grant.

He told the Court of Session that weeks before Macari was sacked in June, 1994, **Celtic** went to Manchester United to play a testimonial for Mark Hughes.

Grant, 45, said: "In the hotel after the game players were left with what appeared to be little or no supervision.

"Some of the younger players, in particular, chose to bring women to the hotel."

Macari was the only member of the **Celtic** squad who did not stay overnight at the hotel and did not give an explanation for his absence.

Grant also accused some players, including club captain Paul McStay and Charlie Nicholas, of using turmoil in the boardroom to hide their own deficiencies on the park at that time.

Grant was giving evidence in the sixth day of an action in which Macari is suing **Celtic** for pounds 431,000 for breach of contract.

Celtic are counterclaiming for the pounds 250,000 they paid Stoke City to free Macari from his contract there.

Later, **Celtic** company secretary Dominic Keane claimed Macari allowed goalkeeper Shay Given to go out of contract.

As a result, Given signed for Blackburn Rovers. At the time he was described as having "tremendous potential" and is now said to be worth pounds 2million.

Keane added: "The problem we faced with Mr Macari is that he was never there for us to build a relationship with."

The hearing, continues.

Macari letter 'gross insult'

Daily Record 28/02/1997

A faxed letter sent by ex-**Celtic** manager Lou Macari to new boss Fergus McCann was grossly insulting, a court heard yesterday.

Celtic club secretary Dominic Keane said McCann had written to Macari offering "an olive branch" just days before Macari's dismissal in June 1994.

But Macari faxed a reply saying McCann "demonstrated a total lack of knowledge and understanding of the role of football manager".

Keane told the Court of Session in Edinburgh: "I found it grossly insulting to Mr McCann who had come along with pounds 1million of his money, saved the club and saved Mr Macari's job as well."

He denied that when the new board took over in March 1994, Fergus McCann was determined to sack Macari.

Up until the fax, he had believed a reconciliation was possible, adding: "I don't believe for one minute Macari wanted that reconciliation."

Macari, now back at Stoke City, is suing **Celtic** for pounds 431,000 for breach of his contract. The club is countersuing Macari for the pounds 250,000 it paid to get him from Stoke originally.

The hearing will continue on Tuesday.

Fergus demands 'made Lou laugh'

Daily Record 05/03/1997

TONY ELLIN

Former **Celtic** manager Lou Macari thought it was funny when he was asked to send reports to Fergus McCann.

The club's operations manager George Douglas told the Court of Session in Edinburgh yesterday: "I think he found it amusing."

He said that during a club tour of Canada, Macari asked: "What on earth does he want me to report?"

Celtic claim the manager disobeyed board instructions to report regularly to Fergus McCann. Macari alleges the managing director interfered in his job when there was nothing to tell him.

Macari is claiming pounds 431,000 damages from **Celtic**, alleging that he was sacked in breach of his three-year contract in June 1994.

Celtic are counter-suing him for pounds 250,000

The hearing continues.

Soccer boss Lou in perks riddle

Daily Record 07/03/1997

Gordon McIlwraith

Soccer boss Lou Macari was receiving perks from Stoke while he was the pounds 150,000 manager of **Celtic**.

During a three-month spell at Parkhead, the English club were paying the rent on his Potteries home, it was revealed yesterday.

They also provided him with a Mercedes car, the Court of Session heard.

But Stoke City secretary Michael Potts, 51, who revealed the information, said he did not know the reason for the arrangement during the spring of 1994.

The former **Celtic** favourite moved from Stoke to Parkhead in October, 1993, and was sacked eight months later.

Potts revealed that when Macari re-joined Stoke in September, 1994, he was paid pounds 78,000 a year, which is still his salary. He also stands to earn pounds 100,000 if the club is promoted to the premiership.

And he will get pounds 500,000 if he keeps them in the top flight for three years.

Macari is suing his old club for pounds 431,000, alleging breach of contract.

Celtic are counter-claiming pounds 250,000 - the amount they paid Stoke City to get him as manager in 1993.

The hearing continues.

Macari 'lost the respect' of player

The Scotsman 08/03/1997

DAVID FINLAY

THE **Celtic** footballer, Peter Grant, told a court yesterday that he had lost respect for Lou Macari before he was dismissed as the club's manager.

Grant, 31, said the "final straw" for him came after a 4-2 defeat for **Celtic** in a New Year's Day Old Firm clash at Parkhead in 1994 and the players did not see the manager until later the following week.

Grant's ex-team mate, the goalkeeper, Pat Bonner, 36, told the court that Mr Macari was "not as thorough as some managers".

Grant said: "The team I hate losing to most is Rangers. I felt as if we were embarrassed and humiliated that day. That was the final straw in my respect for him. I thought it was important he came in."

As he gave evidence on the eleventh day of an action at the Court of Session in Edinburgh between Mr Macari and **Celtic**, the player said he felt that, in the midst of the boardroom upheavals at the club, the manager had failed to provide the support needed.

Grant, who has played under five managers during his 14-year career at Parkhead, said Mr Macari's style of management during his eight months in charge of **Celtic** was different to the others.

Grant said that he had been out of the game for more than three months with a knee injury and said the manager only spoke to him a couple of times during the period. He returned to the team in an Old Firm match and the manager was quoted as saying he was surprised at how fit he was.

Grant said he felt that if the manager had taken the time to check on his fitness it would have come as no surprise. He agreed with Mr Macari's counsel, Colin Boyd QC, that he was aggrieved at being left out for the next game, but did not necessarily think it was indicative of the manager's future plans for him.

The players were giving evidence in an action in which Mr Macari is suing **Celtic** for 431,000 claiming he was sacked in breach of his contract at Parkhead in June 1994.

Celtic are contesting the action and have countered by suing the former manager for 250,000 - the amount it paid to Stoke City to secure his services as manager in 1993.

The case was adjourned.

Celtic ace raps Macari

Daily Record 08/03/1997

Celtic star Peter Grant yesterday told how an Old Firm defeat led to him losing all respect for his old boss, Lou Macari.

Macari, who was sacked by **Celtic**, is suing the club for alleged breach of contract.

Grant, giving evidence at the Court of Session in Edinburgh, spoke of the New Year's Day game when **Celtic** went down 4-2.

He said: "The team I hate losing most to is Rangers. I felt as if we were embarrassed and humiliated that day." Grant said Macari didn't come into the dressing room after the whistle, and only spoke to players later the following week. The midfielder said: "That was the final straw in my respect for him."

Macari moved from Stoke to Parkhead in 1993 and was sacked eight months later.

He is suing **Celtic** for pounds 431,000 but the club have hit back with a counter-claim for pounds 250,000 - the amount they paid Stoke to get him as manager.

The hearing was adjourned until June.

Trial and tribulation as Macari quits

Scotland on Sunday 20/04/1997

By Sydney Barrett

LOU MACARI yesterday announced that he will quit as manager of Stoke City at the end of the season, blaming the pressure of his ongoing court battle with **Celtic** for his decision.

The former Scottish internationalist issued a statement on the eve of yesterday's Potteries derby with Port Vale at the Victoria Ground after informing his chairman, Peter Coates, of his decision. He said: "It has taken a great deal of thought, but it is the only thing I can do. I have got to think of myself but also of how I can put the club first. I cannot serve Stoke City's best interests as manager next season if I am in a court in Scotland."

Macari spent three weeks in court in Edinburgh recently as **Celtic** opened their case against him for breach of contract during his eight months as Parkhead boss, prior to his dismissal in June 1994. The court action had already forced him to miss Stoke's home match against Grimsby Town in March because he was giving evidence.

Macari's counter-claim against the Glasgow club for wrongful dismissal should have gone ahead this summer but has been put back to September and is expected to last five weeks.

Club chairman Peter Coates said Macari informed him of his decision at a brief meeting on Friday. "I know he has been extremely concerned about the court case because the financial implications are very significant for him," he said. "I have realised it has been causing him a lot of worry and anxiety. He has told me he feels he would find it difficult to be in charge at the start of next season."

Mr Coates said the club would not be advertising for a new manager immediately. He added: "At the end of the season the board of directors will meet to review the situation."

Macari talks of plot to get him fired

The Scotsman 01/10/1997

JOHN ROBERTSON Law Correspondent

A THUMPING victory against arch rivals Rangers would not cause **Celtic's** managing director Fergus McCann to bat an eyelid, the club's former manager and lifetime supporter, Lou Macari, claimed yesterday.

With a limited knowledge of football, Mr McCann's driving ambition had been to put **Celtic** back on the rails financially after taking control in 1994, Mr Macari told a court.

"I got the feeling, rightly or wrongly, that if we went to Ibrox and won 4-0, it would not make the slightest difference to him," Mr Macari said. "There wouldn't be a reaction at all."

Giving evidence at the Court of Session where he is claiming 431,000 after being sacked as manager, Mr Macari said that he received a warning letter from Mr McCann after the two men had spoken only twice.

"I asked him to stop sending me letters. I said: 'I do not really need a penpal.'"

Mr Macari had been lured to **Celtic** Park as successor to Liam Brady in 1993 but was dismissed only eight months into a three-year, 450,000 contract. The sacking followed Mr McCann's arrival.

Mr Macari's action is being defended by **Celtic** which is counter-claiming 250,000, the compensation paid to Stoke City to get him as manager. The club says the sacking was justified because Mr Macari failed to perform his duties.

The case started in February and had been adjourned until yesterday when the judge, Lady Cosgrove, was told that Tommy Burns, who followed Mr Macari as manager and who has also lost the post, was being lined up as a witness for Mr Macari.

It was said that, since leaving Parkhead, Mr Burns had featured in newspaper articles and had said things that were "not altogether complimentary to Mr McCann".

The court heard that Mr Macari enjoyed success as a player with **Celtic**, Manchester United and Scotland.

He said he had always been a **Celtic** supporter and was still a fan.

The "old" board, which appointed him, allowed him to get on with his job. "Everywhere I have been, that has been normal. It was certainly the case at **Celtic** when I was a player under Jock Stein. They would not dare interfere with him."

Mr Macari said he had first met Mr McCann, who was in the court, the day after the takeover on 4 March 1994. The team was playing in Perth and the new managing director introduced himself in the dressing room.

"He briefly shook my hand on the way out. That was it," said Mr Macari.

Their next encounter was some days later on staircase in **Celtic** Park. "I just happened to bump into him and he informed me that the players had no confidence in me and he turned and started to walk away," Mr Macari said. "I asked him to explain what he meant and who he meant but I didn't get an answer from him."

Under the previous regime, Mr Macari had attended all board meetings. That stopped when Mr McCann took control.

Mr Macari said: "That tells its own story. I have heard of very few football managers that aren't invited to board meetings unless ... they are going to be kicked out the door."

He received a warning letter from Mr McCann on 25 March, questioning his level of commitment. By then he had still spoken only twice to the man in charge.

"I was most annoyed and most upset. In my opinion, he was obviously looking to get me out of **Celtic** Park and looking for any reason at all to get me out. I felt the letter was the first part in the process."

Mr Macari said his office and Mr McCann's office were only yards apart.

"I asked him to stop sending me letters. I said: 'I do not really need a penpal.' He made the remark that there could be more letters on the way."

Mr McCann then insisted on daily reports and Mr Macari said he could only think that it was a move to make life uncomfortable for him. He had no doubt that Mr McCann was trying to get rid of him.

The hearing continues.

Macari says he heard of sacking through a phone call on holiday

The Scotsman 02/10/1997

GILL SMITH

THE former **Celtic** manager, Lou Macari, said yesterday he first found out he had been sacked when a journalist phoned him while he was on holiday in the United States.

At the Court of Session in Edinburgh, Mr Macari revealed how **Celtic's** chief executive, Fergus McCann, had objected to the holiday, and to his attendance at the World Cup finals of 1994.

Mr McCann had wanted him to fly back and forth to Scotland in between the matches he had planned to watch. On 10 June, four days before he was due to leave for the US, he spoke to Mr McCann.

"I had a discussion with Mr McCann about my holidays and that I was going away on the 14th and I was combining my holiday with the World Cup. He said 'you can't have a holiday, you've work to do here'."

"I told him I was going to the World Cup and on holiday. He then said 'you can go to the World Cup and fly back and forwards after every game'. It was laughable." Macari, who has also managed Stoke City, West Ham United and Swindon Town, is claiming 431,000 from **Celtic** after being sacked as the club's manager in 1994, eight months into a three-year contract.

The action is being defended by **Celtic**, which is counter-claiming 250,000, the compensation paid to Stoke City to get him as manager. The club has also claimed the sacking was justified because Macari failed to perform his duties.

Mr Macari said that on the day he was flying to the United States he had phoned Mr McCann from Manchester airport to pass on a contact number.

He said: "I told him I was at Manchester airport and heading to America. He told me I couldn't go to America. He indicated we'd have to part company. He didn't say I was sacked."

Mr Macari alleges that, after arriving at his father-in-law's house in South Carolina, he was told Mr McCann had phoned his in-laws half an hour after the two men had spoken to ask if he had arrived yet.

A couple of days later his dismissal was announced to the press but he only found out when a member of the press called him in the US. Mr Macari said that, as a football manager, he expected to be allowed to do his job, while Mr McCann, whose knowledge of football was "nil", would get on with his job.

But Mr Macari claimed Mr McCann did not let him get on with managing the team. He had been working on three deals, one involving **Celtic** player Simon Donnelly. But Mr McCann had refused to agree to Donnelly's terms when he had recommended that the player's contract be extended.

Mr Macari said: "It was like a slap in the face that I had made a decision that this player be given a longer contract and then that decision wasn't being allowed to be carried out." The case was adjourned until today.

FERGUS KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT FOOTBALL!

Daily Record 02/10/1997

Allison McLaughlin

Lou Macari yesterday said Parkhead boss Fergus McCann knew NOTHING about football.

And the ex-**Celtic** manager accused the chief executive of interfering in his job in the weeks leading up to his sacking.

At the Court of Session in Edinburgh, Macari praised McCann for leading a consortium which got the club back on its feet.

But the former **Celtic** and Scotland player added: "His knowledge of football is nil."

Macari took over the reins at **Celtic** in 1993 but got the boot eight months later, soon after McCann arrived.

He told the court he had a free rein on football issues under the old board.

But the new supremo blocked moves to increase the wages of wonderkid Simon Donnelly, who had broken into the first team.

Macari claimed McCann told him upping Donnelly's wages from pounds 250 a week would be "too expensive".

The pair clashed again after McCann challenged Macari over a proposed pre-season trip to the Far East.

Macari said: "He was interfering with my job."

He told the court he got a call from McCann at his Stoke home after an end-of-season tour of Canada.

"He asked me what I was doing at home. I told him it was my summer holidays.

"He indicated that I should make my way to Glasgow."

On Macari's return to Parkhead, he was given a letter listing complaints.

He said: "It was what I expected. I always thought Mr McCann was trying to get rid of me."

Asked why he was worried about McCann, Macari said that before the takeover he had been approached by two men from a group seeking to get rid of the old board.

He said: "I made it clear that I had no intention of doing that and sent them off.

"I felt that the gentlemen that approached me were representing Mr McCann."

Macari said he told McCann he planned to go to the USA for the World Cup - but McCann told him: "You've work to do here."

He phoned McCann as he waited to board his flight to America, and the chief executive hinted they might have to part company.

But Macari only found out he was sacked when he was contacted by a journalist.

Macari said there was no justification in his sacking.

He is suing **Celtic** for pounds 431,000 for breach of contract. **Celtic** are contesting the action and counter-suing for pounds 250,000. The case, before Lady Cosgrove, was adjourned until Tuesday.

McCann's court evidence 'was lies'

The Scotsman 08/10/1997

JOHN ROBERTSON Law Correspondent

FORMER **Celtic** manager Lou Macari yesterday accused the club's managing director, Fergus McCann, of lying in the witness box at the Court of Session.

The two men have given different versions of a meeting in front of a lawyer shortly before Mr Macari's sacking in June 1994.

In his evidence, Mr McCann, who had just taken control of the club, said the manager had undertaken to have a number of new players at **Celtic** Park before going to the World Cup in the United States.

The solicitor, David Semple, gave a similar account.

Yesterday, under cross-examination from Matthew Clarke, QC, counsel for **Celtic**, Mr Macari said he would not have discussed football matters such as the signing of players with a stranger, as Mr Semple had been.

Asked for his reaction to the lawyer's evidence, Mr Macari replied: "I would have to say Mr Semple is lying." And Mr McCann's testimony on the matter? "I would have to say similar."

Mr Clarke asked whether the managing director and the solicitor had also lied when they said that, at the same meeting, Mr Macari had undertaken to report daily to Mr McCann. "Yes," said Mr Macari.

When it was suggested that Mr Macari was lying, not the other two witnesses, he answered: "I am afraid not."

In the court case, Mr Macari is claiming 431,000 over his dismissal as manager only eight months into a three-year, 450,000 contract. **Celtic** is counter-claiming 250,000, the compensation paid to Stoke City when Mr Macari moved to Parkhead as Liam Brady's successor.

The club says the sacking was justified because Mr Macari had failed to comply with directions from the board of directors and to devote sufficient time and attention to his duties.

One of the complaints made against Mr Macari was that he had failed to move his family home to Glasgow from Stoke and had spent much time travelling south to see his wife and children.

Mr Macari said a move north had been planned for his family but he believed that he had been capable of carrying out the **Celtic** job while his family continued to live in England.

"I don't actually believe my wife could have any input into me helping **Celtic** be a top-class football club again," he added.

The hearing continues.

Burns saw fate sealed in confidential letter

The Scotsman 15/10/1997

MARTIN HANNAN and JOHN ROBERTSON

THE long-running confrontations between **Celtic**'s managing director, Fergus McCann, and former manager Tommy Burns were revealed in detail in court yesterday.

The behind-the-scenes turmoil at Parkhead during Mr Burns's two-and-a-half years as manager was laid bare during testimony by the former Scottish international footballer, once the darling of the Glasgow club's fans.

Even as arch-rivals Rangers closed in on **Celtic**'s record of nine league wins in a row, there were clashes over a range of issues from the buying and selling of players to Mr Burns being criticised as too "intense and emotional" in a confidential letter, which the manager saw lying on Mr McCann's desk.

Mr Burns told the court how a glance at the document had confirmed his suspicions that his contract would not be renewed. He had gone to Mr McCann's office for a meeting, but the managing director was late. The document "just caught my eye. I glanced at it and saw my name and I read through some things," said Mr Burns.

It was a letter to the club's solicitors, which included a transcript of a board meeting at which Mr Burns had been discussed. He had been blamed for the club's poor disciplinary record and criticised for being intense and emotional.

"My intensity was getting through to the players and making them unable to perform properly. It was saying my relationship with the managing director had never been right and it was possibly best for a change," he said.

In the Court of Session in Edinburgh yesterday Mr Burns described the managing director as "not a football person". He said **Celtic** under Mr McCann was "not being run the way a normal football club should be" and that the managing director's main interest had been to maximise his investment in the club.

Mr McCann listened intently to the evidence of his former employee, who had been called as a witness in the case of another former manager, Lou Macari, who is suing **Celtic** for 431,000 over his dismissal in June 1994.

Mr Macari had been only eight months into a three-year contract. His sacking followed Mr McCann's arrival. **Celtic** claims the sacking was justified because Mr Macari failed to perform his duties. In the same case, **Celtic** has counter-claimed 250,000, the compensation paid to Stoke City to get Mr Macari as manager. Mr Burns, 40, now a coach with Newcastle United, replaced Mr Macari. **Celtic** was later fined a record 100,000 by the Scottish Football Association for illegally approaching him while he was manager at Kilmarnock. Mr Burns said his leaving of Kilmarnock could have been handled with more dignity. "I didn't want to leave there with a lot of bad feeling, but that was the case."

When he joined **Celtic**, the club was at its lowest level for a long time with many ordinary players and only three or four quality players. From the outset there were problems between the manager and Mr McCann.

Mr Burns said: "The first year was very difficult for both of us because we were under a great deal of pressure to turn the club round. But there were so many confrontations in the early weeks that, basically, we just drifted apart."

There were problems over buying and selling players. Mr Burns said he had wanted to sell one player but Mr McCann disagreed. Mr Burns had been in a hurry to get results and needed to move quickly in the transfer market. "Mr McCann was always searching for a logic within that. Unfortunately, within football there is very little logic. When you are a manager and you want to get a player, you want him immediately.

"He wanted to negotiate the best deal for the club. I didn't have any problems with that, but he had to understand the speed with which it had to be done. He wanted to do it in his own time and some of the time he wasn't prepared to furnish me with the facts about exactly what was going on."

Mr Burns added: "Mr McCann wasn't a football person. He didn't understand the psychology of the game. He didn't like the emotion, the passion and the competitiveness."

Mr Burns was invited to attend only two or three board meetings in his first season at Parkhead. Mr McCann had wanted Mr Burns to talk to him first and then he would decide whether an issue should be raised at board level. At Kilmarnock, Mr Burns had spoken to the board every week.

Asked about his performance as manager before he left in April this year, Mr Burns said he had done the best he could. He had suspected in January that his contract would not be renewed. The team had won nine out of 12 games but there was incessant press pressure because Rangers were heading for the record-equalling ninth championship in a row.

Mr Burns spoke to Mr McCann because he wanted to be able to ease the strain on the team by telling staff that they were going to get another couple of years to take the club forward.

However, Mr McCann was evasive and was "not for talking about that".

Asked if he had left Parkhead voluntarily, Mr Burns said: "I spoke to Mr McCann and the directors and gave them my thoughts for the future. Mr McCann came back two days later and told me they would not be renewing my contract."

He agreed with Matthew Clarke, QC, for **Celtic**, that he had been given more money to spend on players than any other manager at Parkhead, but added: "My need was greater than any other manager."

It was "most definitely" the case that Mr McCann's personal efforts and financial investment had contributed to an improvement in **Celtic's** fortunes.

The hearing continues.

Burns didn't have brains to turn Celts into champs

Daily Record 15/10/1997

Rory Macleod

Former Celt Rudi Vata is not surprised to see things looking up for his old side at last.

The Parkhead men's form - including two Euro draws against Liverpool - has fired optimism among fans that this could be the year they wrest the title back from Rangers.

And Vata, now with Apollonas Limassol in Cyprus, reckons that is down to the summer axing of former boss Tommy Burns.

The Albanian, who left **Celtic** last year, feels Burns didn't give him a chance to prove himself before selling him and there is still no love lost with him or managing director Fergus McCann.

Vata - on the scoresheet last week for his national side against Germany - said: "I never thought Tommy Burns would be the man to make **Celtic** great.

"People should not think he was popular with the players.

"When he was a player at **Celtic** there were regular fights in the dressing-room between him and other players.

"When he became **Celtic** boss those who had fought with him knew they would be kicked out.

"I don't think Tommy Burns had the brain or big enough thinking to take **Celtic** to the top.

"Things at **Celtic** are a lot better now, but the set-up is still not right. Fergus McCann may be a good businessman, but he's no football man."

Vata still keeps up to date with the Premier League by getting the Daily Record every day and watching games on Sky TV - and he reckons the fare is just the same as he left it.

Now settled with his Scottish girlfriend, Ann Frances Murray, in Limassol, Vata said: "The game in Scotland may excite the fans but clubs must start thinking differently to achieve success outside of their own country.

"**Celtic** and Rangers are so far ahead of the other clubs but they must change their game to become as big as they could.

Their last game was terrible and an example of how bad the Scottish game can be.

"Walter Smith may be a good manager in Scotland, but if Rangers were to play the Champions League for 200 years they would never win anything.

"I loved Glasgow and all it had, but I have so much more here and there is not the same pressure. Although that is because they are not as passionate about their football here, which is something I miss.

"Apollonas may not be a big club like **Celtic** but they certainly look after their players.

"I miss the big club atmosphere that was there with **Celtic** but look at what else I have now.

"It is sunny here and warm, people go around with a smile and are happy. All they want to do is have a good time."

Despite his criticisms, there is no disguising Rudi's affection for Scotland, the Scottish game and, of course, **Celtic**.

His plush, polished marble-floored apartment is still proudly adorned with trophies and awards from his **Celtic** days.

And he groans about the glass trophies that were smashed and lost during an earthquake in Cyprus last year.

He proudly points to the trophies and singles out the commemorative glass bowl from Mick McCarthy's testimonial in Dublin in May 1996 when he last pulled on the famous green and white hoops.

A move back to Scottish football is not ruled out by the talented defender who is reportedly having a great season in Cyprus.

His girlfriend is from Wishaw, where her family still live, and his elder brother, Aleks, still lives and works in Motherwell.

But Ann Frances is setting up her own hairdressing studio in Limassol so the big fella is in no great rush to move on.

He thinks hard before saying: "I don't know what I will decide to do in the future.

"I am enjoying my football in Cyprus and, at 28, still have a number of good years left in the game if I look after myself.

"I have a year left of my contract here which I will see out.

"But I would be lying if I said I did not like the attention that goes with a big club and I don't mind the goldfish bowl that kind of club puts you in.

"But I am happy here at the moment and the club here look after us very well."

Vata is also reminded of home by the title fight his Apollonas side are locked in every season with deadly rivals Anorthosis.

He said: "Having been at **Celtic**, I know what it is like being second and not prising the league away from your biggest rivals.

"But the difference between Glasgow and here, and **Celtic** and Apollonas, is it is sunny and warm here and we CAN close the gap and take the title."

I learned about my sacking in memo Fergus left lying in his office

Daily Record 15/10/1997

Gordon McIlwraith

Former **Celtic** boss Tommy Burns knew he was facing the boot when he found a secret memo.

It was lying in managing director Fergus McCann's office and it blamed him for the team's poor performance on the park.

The note suggested it was time for a change of manager.

And the following month, Burns was told by McCann that his contract wasn't being renewed.

The ex-Parkhead star revealed the story about the memo at the Court of Session yesterday.

He was giving evidence in the legal battle between managing director McCann and another former manager, Lou Macari.

Burns said: "Mr McCann wasn't a football person.

"He didn't understand the psychology of the game.

"He didn't like the emotion, the passion and the competitiveness attached to the game ... anything like that.
"Basically that's what keeps the game going."
Asked about his contact with McCann in the early days, Burns said: "Initially, it was very difficult for us.
"We were both under a great deal of pressure to turn the club round and get things up and running.
"But there were so many confrontations in the early weeks that basically we just drifted apart."
Burns told of problems with McCann over buying and selling players.
He wanted to sell a player he felt the club didn't need, but McCann disagreed.
And when he tried to get permission to make a new signing, McCann took two weeks to get back to him.
Burns said he needed to buy and sell players quickly.
He told the court: "Mr McCann was always searching for a logic within that.
"Unfortunately, within football there is very little logic.
"When you're a manager and you want to get a player, you want to go and get him immediately.
"He wanted to negotiate the best deal for the club. I didn't have any problems with that but he had to understand the speed with which it had to be done.
"He wanted to do it in his own time and some of the time he wasn't prepared to furnish me with the facts about exactly what was going on."
Burns, 40, now a coach with Newcastle United, was under great pressure to stop Rangers equalling **Celtic's** nine-in-a-row record.
In January, he spoke to McCann because he wanted to put his staff at ease by telling them they had another couple of years to take the club forward.
But Burns said McCann was "evasive" and didn't want to talk about the future until the end of the season.
In March, he was due to meet McCann but found his office empty.
While alone in the office, he saw a document lying on the table and noticed his name mentioned in it.
Burns said: "It basically just caught my eye. I glanced at it and saw my name and read through some things."
It turned out to be the transcript of a board meeting which had been included in a confidential letter to the club's lawyers.
In it, board members blamed Burns for the club's poor disciplinary record.
They also criticised him for being intense and emotional - which was allegedly affecting the players' performance.
Burns added: "It was saying my relationship with the managing director had never been right and it was possibly best for a change."
The manager spoke to McCann and the directors in April about his plans for the future.
But Burns added: "Mr McCann came back two days later and told me they would not be renewing my contract at the end of the season."
Burns played for **Celtic** for 14 years before leaving to join Kilmarnock in 1989. He was later appointed their manager.
He returned to Parkhead in 1994 to succeed Macari as **Celtic** boss.
He told the court his move from Kilmarnock "could have been handled with a lot more dignity".
It had left a lot of bad feeling between the clubs.
Burns said **Celtic** were at their lowest level for a long time when he took over.
They had a lot of ordinary players and only three or four quality members of the team.
McCann told Burns he was to take over the running of the entire football side of the club.
And he pledged there would be pounds 3million to buy players in Burns' first season.
Asked in court about his performance as manager, Burns said he thought he'd done the best he could.
But he had started at a great disadvantage as rivals Rangers had already won the league six times in a row and had more cash than **Celtic** to spend on players.
He said: "We had to basically start from scratch and they had a huge start on us."
He admitted he had been given more money to spend on players than any other **Celtic** manager.
But Burns added: "My need was greater than any other manager."
In his first season at Parkhead, Burns was only invited to two or three board meetings - at Kilmarnock he'd spoken to the board every week.
He said: "It was very difficult to get any continuity within the club because it wasn't being run the way a normal football club should at that time."
He agreed McCann's effort and financial investment had "most definitely" contributed to an improvement in **Celtic's** fortunes.
Macari is suing **Celtic** for pounds 430,000, alleging they broke his contract.
In a counter claim, the club want pounds 250,000 from Macari - the amount they paid Stoke in compensation to get him.
Burns was called as a witness by Macari's lawyers after they read the exclusive story of his departure from **Celtic** in the Daily Record.
The club tried to gag Burns - by claiming much of his evidence had nothing to do with the Macari case.
But the judge, Lady Cosgrove, rejected **Celtic's** argument and allowed Burns to give evidence.
The hearing continues.

McCann 'called Macari low life'

The Scotsman 16/10/1997

JOHN ROBERTSON Law Correspondent

A FORMER **Celtic** director described yesterday how he had been shocked by Fergus McCann giving the tag "low life" to Lou Macari, the club's manager at the time.
Brian Dempsey, 50, said he had supported the McCann-led takeover at **Celtic** Park in March 1994 and within days recommended to the new managing director that Mr Macari be dismissed.
"I felt Mr Macari had been used by the old board to support some of their actions and therefore he was on a target list as far as I was concerned," Mr Dempsey told the Court of Session after being called as a witness by Mr Macari in his damages action against **Celtic**.
"The new administration had to be very open where everyone could work together. I felt he [Mr Macari] had been a supporter of the old board and their running of **Celtic** Football Club."
Mr Dempsey had wanted Tommy Burns to be approached formally to replace Mr Macari and Mr McCann, the club's managing director, had said he would go away and think about matters.
By April, Mr McCann gave the impression that he was "unhappy" with the manager and would deal with it in his own time. However, the question of Mr Macari's contract had never been discussed in the various talks between Mr Dempsey and Mr McCann.
Mr Dempsey said there had been meetings with potential investors in **Celtic** who had also wanted to see changes in terms of the manager and players.
Speaking of one meeting, the witness added: "He [Mr McCann] referred to Mr Macari as 'low life'. That more than hit me because it caused me a great deal of concern that any one of us in that room would feel derogatory about the **Celtic** manager."
"I took it to be an American colloquialism which Mr McCann was given to use."
Matthew Clarke, QC, for **Celtic**, suggested that such a remark had not been made but Mr Dempsey insisted: "I heard the phrase. It was not something I was used to."
Mr Macari is suing **Celtic** for 431,000 over his sacking, eight months into a three-year contract. **Celtic** claims the dismissal was justified because Mr Macari had failed to perform his duties.
The club is counter-claiming 250,000, the compensation paid to Stoke City when Mr Macari moved to **Celtic**.

FERGUS SAID CELT LOU WAS LOW-LIFE

Daily Record 16/10/1997

Celtic chief Fergus McCann described Lou Macari as "low-life" just days after taking over at Parkhead, it was claimed yesterday.
The slur even stunned ex-director Brian Dempsey - the man who was instrumental in Macari's downfall.
It was revealed by Dempsey at the Court of Session as he was giving evidence for Macari in his pounds 430,000 action against **Celtic**.
Dempsey, 50, said that after helping McCann take control in March 1994, he spoke to him about issues facing the club.
He added: "One of the most prominent was my opinion of the manager, and I recommended Mr Macari should be dismissed."
"Now was the time, with the management system and the ethos of the club changing."
"It was the right time to change all sorts of things."
"I felt Mr Macari had been used by the old board to support some of their actions and therefore he was on a target list, as far as I was concerned."
"If there were any remnants from the past that would not help take the club forward, no distraction could be afforded."
He claimed the "low-life" remark was made at a later meeting with McCann and potential investors.
Dempsey said: "It caused me a great deal of concern that anyone of us in that room would feel derogatory about the **Celtic** manager."
"It was not something I was used to and I was concerned about the standing of **Celtic** Football Club."
He admitted that he had recommended to McCann that Tommy Burns should be approached to be the new manager.

Dempsey said that in April, he got the impression McCann was "unhappy" with Macari and he would deal with it in his own time. The following month, Dempsey said, McCann phoned to say he would sack Macari the next day. The hearing continues.

Celtic 'unreasonable' in house move request

The Scotsman 17/10/1997

A FORMER **Celtic** director told a court yesterday that he believed Fergus McCann made an unreasonable request for Lou Macari to move his family home to Scotland. After Mr McCann had secured his place on the Parkhead board, he told Mr Macari, then **Celtic's** manager, that he had to move his family residence from England to Glasgow. But the former director, James Farrell, told the Court of Session in Edinburgh, on the last day of evidence in a case between Mr Macari and **Celtic**, he believed it had been unreasonable.

The case will resume in January for legal submissions before Lady Cosgrove issues her decision later.

Mr Farrell said Mr Macari's problems over moving house were common to football managers. "There was always a reasonable approach by a sensible board of directors to allow managers and players to accommodate their circumstances and their children's education," he said.

He was asked about minutes in which directors expressed concerns about the performance of the management team, led by Mr Macari. He said: "The person who was making complaints, and the only person making complaints, was Mr McCann, the managing director."

Mr Farrell said he believed Mr McCann had been influential in the outcome of an extraordinary general meeting at which he was voted off the board. "He got some of the incoming members of the new board to vote against me and certainly put pressure on other directors, in particular Jack McGinn, who apologised to me and said Fergus McCann had put the gun to his head and he had no alternative but to vote against me."

Celtic's lawyer, Matthew Clarke, QC, asked if Mr Farrell's giving evidence in the case could be seen as a way of getting back at Mr McCann. Mr Farrell said: "No, I am only interested in the justice of the matter as I see it."

Mr Macari is suing **Celtic** for 431,000 following his dismissal as the club's manager in June 1994. The former **Celtic** and Scotland player is alleging he was sacked in breach of his contract. **Celtic** has countersued Mr Macari for 250,000 - the amount it paid to Stoke City to secure his services as manager in 1993.

Lou waits for verdict

Daily Record 17/10/1997

Lou Macari faces an agonising wait to learn the result of his court case against **Celtic**.

The ex-Parkhead manager could be landed with a pounds 750,000 bill if his action fails.

Evidence in the legal battle over alleged breach of contract ended at the Court of Session yesterday.

But Macari won't know until early next year whether his pounds 430,000 case has succeeded.

Legal costs may run to pounds 500,000 and **Celtic** have a pounds 250,000 counter-claim.

Final submissions have to be made before a judgment from Lady Cosgrove.
