



NO FLAGGING: MacKinnon

Donnie is OAP in line of fire

By Kevin McGoldrick

DONNIE MacKINNON is not ready to drop his linesman's flag – despite a 70th birthday being not too far away.

The popular match official has been running the line at the top end of the junior game for nine years.

And after being the victim of a barrage of good-natured banter Mackinnon is adamant he'll have the last laugh.

He said: "I hung up my boots at 32 due to a torn hamstring injury but was desperate to stay in the game.

"I decided the next best thing was to become a ref and I have been involved ever since.

"I have refereed in four Scottish Cup Finals at various levels. But one of the highlights was being fourth official in the 2008 Junior Cup Final between Cumnock and Bathgate at Rugby Park.

"Since 1999 I have been running the line in the West Region, which I really enjoy. The banter between the supporters is what keeps me going.

"Going into big games can be intimidating for some people but I can't get enough.

Speechless

"Experience has taught me any abuse aimed at you is not personal.

"I have become thick-skinned and sometimes I try to catch the punters out by replying to their shouts – usually it works because it leaves them speechless.

"But it is honest decisions and sometimes the officials get it wrong. We are only human.

"I have a great relationship with all the managers and always shake their hand whether it's a win or a loss for them."

The 67-year-old knows his days of running the line will come to an end sooner rather than later.

But he's determined to pass on advice for any up-and-coming man in the middle.

Donnie said: "I will take things a bit easier next season, probably only doing six games a week instead of the normal seven.

"I help out with referee training schools in Lanarkshire but would like to get involved even more in nurturing the stars of the future.

"I've worked with some terrific young refs who have all gone on to do very well at senior level and there are more coming through.

"I have met some great people in the game since I started officiating in 1975. When I call it a day I would like to be remembered as someone who was honest, fair and liked to join in the banter."