

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up



In a new feature, The Edinburgh Reporter will provide a comprehensive weekly roundup on sport in the capital. This week, we look at Edinburgh Rugby's defeat to Munster in the Heineken Cup, go behind the scenes at Tynecastle and Easter Road, and follow the Edinburgh teams' progress in the Central Taxis East of Scotland League. In addition, we cover Sir Chris Hoy's latest triumph, look at the Edinburgh Capitals' performances in UK wide Elite Ice Hockey League, and report on the latest signing by the Edinburgh Monarchs.

Rugby:

Edinburgh's dismal season in the Heineken Cup continued on Sunday, and Michael Bradley's team remain bottom of pool one after going down 26-17 to Munster before 6220 fans at Murrayfield. Two late tries by Dougie Fife added some respectability to the final score-line, but in truth, Munster deserved their victory.

Munster took the lead in the second minute to the delight of their large travelling support, when Ronan O'Gara stroked over a penalty from in front of the posts after Stuart McInally was penalised.

Edinburgh fought back and stretched the Munster defence looking for their first try in this year's competition, but failed to capitalise on their pressure.

The Irishmen responded and their next sortie into Edinburgh territory yielded another penalty, but to their relief, O'Gara was off target with his effort from left of the posts.

A few minutes later, Willem Nel was adjudged to have collapsed a scrum inside the home 22, and O'Gara made no mistake with the penalty.

He then took the score to 9-0 with yet another penalty following a collapsed scrum

Edinburgh pulled three points back with a Laidlaw penalty in front of the posts, but O'Gara quickly restored the nine-point gap after Edinburgh's problems dealing with the scrums continued.

Munster dominated possession in the early period of the second half but failed to score and the pressure was relieved when Edinburgh were awarded a penalty, however, as Richie Rees attempted to run the ball out of defence, he was blocked by Dave Kilcoyne who received 10 minutes in the sin bin.

Munster were awarded a scrum after Dave Denton was adjudged to have passed forward, and the ball was passed to Conor Murray whose chip was palmed clear by Greig Laidlaw. After calling for assistance from the video official, Laidlaw was shown a yellow card for a deliberate knock-on. Edinburgh then collapsed the ensuing scrum, handing Munster a penalty try which O'Gara converted to hand the visitors a 19-3 lead.

Munster were desperate for a bonus point, and Murray scored a try from close range which O'Gara converted, before being replaced.

As Munster continued to attack, Edinburgh struck on the counter-attack and Dougie Fife dived over for Edinburgh's first try in this year's tournament, which Laidlaw converted.

With three minutes remaining, Fife evaded two tackles to score his second try which skipper Laidlaw converted to end the scoring.

There was no competitive club rugby, but Edinburgh teams,

Currie, Heriots, Edinburgh Accies and Boroughmuir will return to action in the Scottish Premiership on 26 January, whilst Stewart's Melville and Watsonians resume their campaigns in the Scottish National League Division One on the same day.

Football -Scottish Premier League

Although the winter shut-down meant no SPL football in the capital, there has been plenty of activity behind the scenes at both Tynecastle and Easter Road.

Hearts fans' favourite Ryan McGowan joined Chinese Super League team Shandong Luneng Taishan on a two year deal for a reported £400,000 fee, whilst reserve goalkeeper Peter Enckelman has left the club after the expiry of his contract.

Midfielder Ryan Stevenson was offered a two game ban by the SFA Compliance Officer for 'Serious Foul Play on an opponent' during the Edinburgh derby, following a tackle on Hibs skipper James McPake. Stevenson refused to accept the ban however a fast track tribunal on Thursday upheld the decision and he will miss the next two games, against Celtic in the SPL then Inverness Caledonian Thistle in the League Cup semi-final which takes place at Easter Road on Saturday 26 January.

Hearts sent a young team to Musselburgh Athletic for a friendly match on Saturday, but the Tynecastle side ended up losing 1-0 to a late Ben Miller goal in a hard fought encounter.

On the east side of the city, Ivan Sproule has joined Ross County on an eighteen month contract. The 31-year-old Northern Ireland international winger played 147 times during two spells at the club, and scored 22 goals. He will be best remembered for scoring a hat-trick in Hibs' 3-0 win against Rangers at Ibrox in August 2005, and also winning a CIS League Cup winners medal against Kilmarnock on 2007. Sproule was a popular figure around Easter Road and left the club in good terms.

Indications are that on-loan stars Leigh Griffiths and Ryan McGivern will remain at the club until the end of the season; however the position regarding Honduran midfielder Jorge Claros is less clear with his parent club Montagua reporting considerable interest in the player.

Griffiths is in trouble after tweeting 'alleged racist comments' in response to an abusive tweet from one of his followers. He immediately deleted the tweet and apologised however the club have confirmed that he will be subject of disciplinary action. Wolves' also issued a statement condemning his behaviour. Lothian and Borders Police and the SFA are investigating the circumstances.

Meanwhile youngster Sam Stanton joined Cowdenbeath on a month long loan, whilst defender Scott Smith has joined Ian Murray's Dumbarton until the end of the season. Goalkeeper Calum Antell's loan deal with Billy Brown's East Fife has been extended.



Hibs under-20 team defeated Livingstone 4-1 at the East Mains Training Ground on Saturday in front of former Hibs player and manager John Collins. The teams went in level after an evenly fought first period, but Hibs dominated the second half, scoring three late goals to seal a comfortable victory, despite a number of regular players missing. Two of the teenagers, Bradley Donaldson and Alex Harris have been rewarded with extended contracts.

The SPL returns on Saturday 19 January when Hibs take on bottom side Dundee at Easter Road, without the suspended Paul Cairney whilst Hearts travel to Parkhead to play champions Celtic, without their captain Marius Zaliukas.

Football – Central Taxis East of Scotland League:



Several Capital teams were involved in the Central Taxis East of Scotland League Premier Division, with Spartans retaining the top spot with a 3-0 victory over Vale of Leven at Ainslie Park, thanks to goals from Danny O'Donnell, Keith McLeod and Jack Beesley.

Elsewhere, Civil Service Strollers lost 2-0 to Heriot Watt University in Muirhouse, whilst Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale beat Whitehill Welfare 3-2 at Saughton Enclosure. Edinburgh City lost 2-1 to champions Stirling University in Stirling, and Tynecastle lost 1-2 to Edinburgh University at Fernieside.

In the First Division, Craigroyston beat Selkirk 2-1 at St Marks Park and Leith Athletic beat Duns 6-1.

Sir Chris Hoy

Edinburgh's Sir Chris Hoy has been in action in Holland, winning the Six Days of Rotterdam event, beating fellow Brit Jason Kenny by just one point. The six-time Olympic champion went into the final day with a three-point lead from Kenny, who led the first two days. Hoy's second place in the sprint and third in the keirin was enough to take the title and he also won the team sprint with Kenny.

Afterwards the 36 year old tweeted: "Thanks Rotterdam! Great six nights of racing, big crowds and brilliant atmosphere. Hope to see you again next year!"

This week, he will be attending the London Bike Show at the ExCel centre in East London, starting on Thursday 17 January and running through Sunday 20 January. Paralympic champions Jody Cundy MBE and Mark Colbourne MBE will also be in attendance at the event which is sure to attract large crowds.

Ice Hockey



Edinburgh Capitals Ice Hockey team had a busy weekend,

travelling to Humberside on Saturday, where they defeated Hull Stingrays 3-2 after penalties, following goals from Curtis Leinweber and Player/Coach Richard Hartmann. The following night however, the Capitals lost 4-3 to Dundee Stars at Murrayfield Ice Rink.

Speedway

In Speedway, the Scotwaste Edinburgh Monarchs have announced that they are bringing back 21 year old German rider Marcel Helfer for his first full season in the UK. The reigning German Under-21 Champion joined the club in early July 2012 scoring 80 points in 19 league matches. The team for 2013 is Derek Sneddon (captain), Craig Cook, Sam Masters, Theo Pijper, Jozsef Tabaka, Max Fricke, Marcel Helfer.