

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



Plenty congratulations are due this weekend, with Hearts reaching the final of the Scottish Communities League Cup, Capital basketball players Gregor Gray (Edinburgh Kings) and Malcolm Winning (Boroughmuir Blaze) winning bronze medals with Great Britain's under-17 team in Australia and 'Amazing' Alex Arthur receiving an MBE at Buckingham Palace. The round-up also highlights some good news for Edinburgh Monarchs and features Edinburgh Capitals latest two games, as well as the Edinburgh Squash Open and the final weekend of the Indoor Scottish Hockey league.

Football

Congratulations to Hearts for reaching the Scottish Communities League Cup final after a nerve-racking victory over Inverness Caledonian Thistle on penalties at Easter Road. The Gorgie side fell behind to an Andrew Shinnie goal just after half time, but equalised through new signing Michael Ngoo before Scott Robinson was sent off for a two footed challenge.

The game finished 1-1 after extra time, and with Hearts leading 5-4 Inverness's substitute Phillip Roberts missed the final penalty to spark wild celebrations amongst the Hearts faithful.

Hearts will play St Mirren at Hampden Park on Sunday 17 March, after the 'Buddies' shock 3-2 win over Celtic on Sunday.

Ben Williams was the hero for Hibs, saving an early Niall McGinn penalty to secure a share of the points against Aberdeen at Pittodrie. Manager Pat Fenlon gave veteran striker

Shefki Kuqi his first SPL start, but the Finnish international was unable to breach the Dons' defence.

Confusion still surrounds the future of on-loan Jorge Claros who did not make the squad, after parent club issued a statement suggesting that the Honduran international would remain at Easter Road for the rest of the season, however Hibs have so far refused to comment.

Meanwhile the SPL have announced that the third Edinburgh derby of the season has been put back 24 hours to Sunday, March 10. The Easter Road clash will have a 12.45pm kick-off and will be broadcast live on Sky Sports.

Hibs game with Motherwell has been brought forward to Friday 15 March with a 7.45pm kick off, whilst Hearts' home match against Ross County on April 6 has been brought forward to noon for live coverage on ESPN

Spartans retained top spot in the Central Taxi's East of Scotland League Premier Division, winning 3-1 against North of Edinburgh neighbours Civil Service Strollers at Ainslie Park. Keith McLeod opened the scoring from the penalty spot after 10 minutes and Willie Bremner added a second six minutes later. Strollers pulled a goal back in the 17th minute from Charles McAleavy, but Kevin Motion wrapped things up with a volley on the hour mark. Elsewhere in the Premier Division Edinburgh City beat Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale 3-1 at Meadowbank.

In the First Division, second half goals by Kyle Boggie, Chris Beaton and Greig Tulloch along with an own goal gave Leith Athletic a comfortable 4-0 win away to Burntisland Shipyards in Fife.

Rugby

Club rugby returned to the capital after a winter's break, with Heriots losing at home to table topping Ayr by 22-16 whilst Currie also lost 17-6 away to Gala in the Scottish

Premiership. Heriots currently sit 5th in the table on 31 points from 13 games, whilst Currie sit third with 36 points from 15 games.



(Photograph by John Preece)

In the Scottish National League Division One Stewarts-Melville FP won 31-23 at home to Hamilton whilst Watsonians lost 8-6 at Selkirk. Watsonians currently sit second in the table, three points behind Gala with 50 points from 14 games, whilst Stewart's Melville sit 6th with 33 points from 14 games.

Murrayfield Wanderers beat Kirkcaldy 28-20 at home in the Scottish Championship League B.

Ice Hockey

Edinburgh Capitals travelled to Belfast on Saturday to play the Belfast Giants, but returned empty handed, losing 5-0 to goals from former Capitals star Mark Garside, Craig Peacock, Darryl Lloyd, Colin Shields and David Phillips.

On Sunday, the Caps took on Sheffield Steelers at Murrayfield and went a goal behind through Simon Fergus. Curtis Leinweber equalised for the Edinburgh side and the game remained 1-1 until late in the third period when Jason Hewitt gave the Steelers the lead. Following a Face Off win, the Capitals tied the game at 2-2 through Brent Patry before Michel scored the winner for the English side to secure the points in overtime to cap a disappointing weekend for Richard Hartman's team.

Boxing

More congratulations are due to Edinburgh boxer, Alex Arthur, who collected his MBE for services to boxing from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace on Friday. The 34-year-old, who has won 31 of his 34 professional bouts, tweeted his 10,000

followers just after the ceremony: "Just out the palace! Really enjoyed the investiture Thanks for all the support guys going for a pint now."

✘ He later added: "Where do I party round London SW1 guys? Lol."

Alex won gold in the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, and subsequently became British, Commonwealth, European and world super-featherweight champion after turning to the professional game in 2000.

Basketball

Congratulations to Capital basketball players Gregor Gray (Edinburgh Kings) and Malcolm Winning (Boroughmuir Blaze) who returned from Australia with bronze medals after Great Britain under-17 team of four produced a superb performance to finish third in a 3 x 3 tournament at a Youth Olympic festival in the searing heat of Sydney last weekend.

Team GB won all three games on the opening day, beating Indonesia 19-17, China 21-13 and Australia (green) 22-19, then managed a further win over New Zealand (20-12) but lost 21-12 to Australia (gold) and 14-13 to a Combined Oceania team. That put them into the last four where they lost 19-16 to Australia (gold) but beat China again to clinch the bronze.

Speedway

Edinburgh Monarchs have been awarded the first semi-final of the British speedway Championship which will take place at Armadale Stadium on Friday, April 19. It will be the biggest meeting staged at the West Lothian venue since the British Under-21 Final in 2000.

Squash

South African Shaun Le Roux beat England's Andy Whipp 11/6

11/3 7/11 11/7 in 47 minutes to win the Artemis Edinburgh Open at the Edinburgh Sports Club.

England's Lauren Briggs beat Netherlands Orla Noom 11/3 11/9 11/8 in 32 minutes to take the WSA \$5k event.

After the events, Shaun said:- "In the first two games I played the best against him I possibly could. I tried to nullify his high pace and play as straight as I could; it worked very well, almost perfect. He came out quicker in the third but in the fourth, I just told myself to get back to what I was doing and thankfully I managed to take it first time. It's been a good weekend, the club, the supporters and of course the sponsors look after us well and it's nice to get my name on that trophy with some of the other big names who have won it."

Lauren said:- "I went on with the intention of taking the game to her and put as much pace into it as possible. I got a good start volleying when I could and putting her under a lot of pressure. In the second and third she got used to it and slowed the pace a lot. You always have to be alert against her, she can turn her intensity on at any time and hit some good winners out of the blue then her confidence really grows. It's good to be back playing tournaments again, even better that after four matches my body is still in one piece. I'm off to Winnipeg tomorrow; it will be even colder than here."

Hockey

Inverleith's hopes of retaining their National Indoor League Division One title were dashed in the final session at Bell's Sports Centre, Perth on Saturday when Grove Menzieshill beat them by a single point.

Both sides recorded routine wins in their opening matches; the Dundee side beating Glynhill Hotel Kelburne (7-0) and Inverleith easily defeating Harris Academy FP (12-0).

In their second match, Grove Menzieshill had a comfortable 4-2 win over city rivals Dundee Wanderers whilst Inverleith were held to a 3-3 draw by Grange.

Eventually it came down to final match shoot-out, with Grove Menzieshill snatching the all important point against Stuart Neave's team in a 4-4 draw to finish top of the table.

As it stands, Grange and Dundee Wanderers will join the top two in the European play-offs at the Indoor Gala Day at Bell's Sports Centre on Saturday 9 February, following their respective third and fourth place finishes.