

Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up

This week, the Edinburgh Reporter congratulates the Scotland Rugby team for a fantastic result against Ireland in the Six Nations at Murrayfield. and ponders the future of Hearts following off-field problems. We also highlight Ice Hockey, Basketball, Hockey, Speedway, Volleyball, American Football and Athletics.

Football

The main talking points amongst football fans in the capital this week have centred on the off-field situation at Tynecastle, following the news that the Lithuanian Bank mainly owned by Vladimir Romanov UKIO Bankas had gone into administration, and the assets and liabilities had been acquired by Siauliu Bankas. There remains much speculation as to how this will affect the Gorgie club; however the more optimistic believe that these events will make it easier for a new owner to acquire the club and Tynecastle at a realistic price, leaving the club debt free. Others believe that Hearts will go into administration resulting in an 18 point deduction and possible relegation, whilst Tynecastle will have to be sold to repay some of the debt. Despite numerous opinions on various fans' forums, the bottom line is that, at the moment, no-one knows exactly how this will end.

Two players left the capital during the week; Hearts Andrew Driver signed a loan deal with Texan side Houston Dynamo, whilst out of favour winger Danny Galbraith joined newly promoted Irish League side Limerick.

It was also announced that The Rangers had paid the final instalment of the transfer fee for Lee Wallace. £500,000 was due to be paid at the end of the season, however the cash

strapped Gorgie side accepted a reduced fee of £400,000 for an early settlement.

On the field, Hearts poor league form continued with a 3-2 defeat to Inverness Caledonian Thistle. ICT took the lead from a Gary Warren header in the 16th minute. Jason Holt equalised for Hearts after 55 minutes, but Billy McKay restored the Highlanders' lead seven minutes later. Andy Webster grabbed a goal back for the Gorgie men but Warren added his second of the day to secure all three points. The Hearts' players were booed off the field at the end of the game by frustrated supporters. They remain in 10th position in the SPL.

A shocking refereeing decision cost Hibs two points against Dundee United at Tannadice on Sunday. The Easter Road side went behind to a John Rankin goal following a mistake by Ben Williams, but a James McPake header from a Leigh Griffiths free-kick saw the teams end the first half on level terms. Griffiths then put Hibs ahead with a contender for goal of the season, before United were wrongly awarded a penalty when Ryan McGivern brought down McKay Stevens well outside the box, but referee Alan Muir inexplicably awarded a penalty which Johnny Russell converted. The result sees Hibs climb to sixth place.



In the Image Printers EOS Qualifying Cup Semi Finals, Spartans lost 2-0 to Stirling University at Ainslie Park, whilst Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale lost 2-1 to Gretna at Saughton Enclosure.

In the Central Taxis Premier Division, Civil Service Strollers lost 7-3 at Muirhouse, whilst Edinburgh University drew 1-1 with Edinburgh City, and Tynecastle beat Heriot Watt 2-0.

In the Central Taxis First Division, Craigroyston beat Gala 4-1, whilst Leith Athletic drew 1-1 away to Eyemouth.

Ice Hockey

The Edinburgh Capitals produced another excellent performance, beating Coventry Blaze 6-2 at Murrayfield Ice Rink on Saturday. Brent Patry gave the home side an early lead and Jordan Steel doubled the advantage before Blaze responded with two goals of their own.

Cutis Leinweber restored the Caps' lead before Marcis Zembergs scored a further three to secure the points.

Speedway

Edinburgh Monarchs' proposed move from Armadale to the Royal Highland Showground at Ingliston will not take place this season; however the club are confident that an entry date of 2014 is a possibility. Improvements to the West Lothian stadium are well under way to make the Friday night experience more enjoyable for the fans.

Volleyball

Edinburgh Jets beat Glasgow Mets II 3-1, 16-25 17-25 25-22 15-25 in Glasgow whilst the City of Edinburgh beat Edinburgh University 3-0 15-25 11-25 13-25 in the Men's' Scottish Volleyball Cup.

In the Women's' Scottish Volleyball Cup, Edinburgh Jets II lost 3-0 to North Lanarkshire 14-25 20-25 6-15 and NUVOC lost 3-0 to Troon Team Ayrshire, 25-12 25-10 25-13. The City of Edinburgh beat St Andrews University 3-0 25-15 25-20 25-12, whilst the Edinburgh Jets beat Glasgow International 3-0 7-25 10-25 19-25 in Glasgow.

Athletics

Olympic athlete Lynsey Sharp has announced that she will not compete in any more indoor events this winter.

Bowling

Portobello ladies beat West Lothian 80-69 in the first round of the Scottish Cup at the Bainfield Bowling Club last week, ensuring a second round tie against East Fife at East Lothian IBC.

Hockey

The top of the table clash between Glynhill Hotel Kenburne and the Grange in the Aberdeen Asset Management National League Division One ended in a 3-3 draw at Bellahouston. The Edinburgh side fought back from 2-0 down to claim an important point and stay in contention for the title. They remain in second place on goal difference with 22 points from nine games.

Elsewhere Inverleith lost 3-2 to AAM Gordonians and they remain in fourth position with 12 points from eight games.

After nine games, the league will split into a Top Five and Bottom Five with points and goals for/against carried forward.

In the second division, CALA Edinburgh beat fellow strugglers Dundee University 3-2 in Tayside.

American Football

Last weekend saw the Edinburgh Napier Knights lose to the playoff bound Glasgow Tigers 36-6.

Unfortunately the Knights had to forfeit the re-arranged away fixture at Stirling scheduled for last Wednesday due to the unavailability of some players and most of the coaches.

Basketball

On Saturday the City of Edinburgh Rocks beat city rivals Boroughmuir Blaze 84-62 in the Senior Men's League to retain top spot.

In the Women's League, The City of Edinburgh Kool Kats beat

Clark Eriksson Fury 88-47 at the Mariner Centre to regain top spot after last week's loss to Glasgow Rocks. The Kats have 27 points from 15 games, although the Rocks sit on third with 25 points from 14 games.

Rugby

And for all things Rugby...*Report by John Preece*

Edinburgh posted yet another loss on Friday, this time going down 24-7 to Ospreys in Swansea. Two early tries gave the Welsh side a 14-0 advantage before Hamish Watson pulled one back for Edinburgh on the 40 minute mark. However second half yellows for Ben Atiga and Nick de Luca gave the home side a platform to build on their score and run out eventual winners 24-7. The Scottish women's defeat against Ireland on Saturday was bookended by wins for the Under 20's and the senior 15. The U20's played their Irish counterparts at Netherdale in Galasheils in their 6 Nations championship. Taking a 14-3 lead into the second quarter of the match, they had two tries scored against them in quick succession, but held a 14-13 lead at half time. Ireland scored their third try fairly early in the second half, but with eight minutes to go, Boroughmuir's Damien Hoyland scored Scotland's third. Tommy Allan kicked the conversion and the young Scots held on for a 21-20 win.

Under instruction to 'get out there and enjoy yourselves' Scotland played an Under 20 women's match at Lasswade against Finland prior to the full side playing Ireland. Leading 12-0 at halftime, the Scots scored another try halfway in to the second half. After a break to tend to an injured Alex Read, the Finnish women found their feet and scored a consolation try to leave the final score at 17-7 to Scotland.

Having beaten England and Wales so far this year, Ireland were odds-on favourites to beat the Scots. And this they duly did, but it wasn't quite the walkover everyone predicted. Indeed Scotland opened the scoring with a penalty from Lisa Richie, before Ireland hit back with one of their own and a try. 8-3 at half time was a long way better than expected and the home side were showing a great deal of spirit and no lack of

talent. However, the strength and skills of the visitors eventually shone through and a penalty and three tries saw them home 30-3.

This reporter has a great deal of time for the women's team as they exist on a minimal budget and have to rely on the good will of their employers, educational institutions and partners to play International rugby. They use up their own (and their family's) time, holidays and take unpaid leave from their jobs, but they will still be found battling away when 70 points down to England. They are, literally, playing for the jersey. Hats off.

Finally, it was the big boys turn to take on the men from the Emerald Isle. Again, Scotland were down with the bookies for a defeat and, somehow, they defied the odds to take the match 12-8. A rather miserable game played under miserable weather at times still managed to keep the fans on the edge of their seats. With first Ireland and then Scotland having the best of the game, it was a combination of good defence and woeful kicking from Ireland that gave the Scots the win. Leading 3-0 at half time, Ireland scored the only try of the match early in the second half, but newby, Paddy Jackson maintained his dreadful day with the boot and four penalties from Greg Laidlaw for the home side saw the Scots over the line. First back-to-back wins since 2001, but how they managed it this time will remain a mystery.

And so to the clubs. In the RBS Premiership, one Edinburgh club was guaranteed a win as Heriots took on struggling visitors Boroughmuir and wiped the floor with them, winning 37-5. Elsewhere, Edinburgh Accies lost 29-15 to Aberdeen Grammar at home and Currie also went down to new league champions Ayr 39-13.

In the National League, Watsonians lost 36-14 at home to Kelso, but in a much closer affair in Jedburgh, Stewarts-Melville were only beaten by the odd point, 32-31, by Jed-Forest.

Overall, not quite the disastrous weekend it was last time,

but when big clubs like Boroughmuir are only winning three games from fifteen, the old FP system is maybe not as well funded as it was and the best players will and are drifting to the winning teams.

There are three match reports this weekend – the [Under 20s](#), the [Women's Rugby](#) and that win by [Scotland v Ireland...](#). All reports and photos by John Preece. Is this one below John Preece's best photo yet?

