

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up



This week, The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports roundup features, not one, but two genuine sporting superstars who figured at the highest levels in their respective sports. Arguably [John McEnroe](#) was the finest tennis player of his generation, and inarguably Ken Buchanan was without doubt the greatest ever Scottish boxer.

Elsewhere, we send out commiserations to Gary Locke and his Hearts team who lost 3-2 in a thrilling Scottish Communities League Cup Final, and the Scotland Rugby team who, despite losing in France, completed their most successful six nations campaign since 2006.

Congratulations however go to former Hibs boss John Hughes for being named Manager of the Month.

Rugby (By John Preece)



A small light in Edinburgh Rugby's, seemingly eternal, gloom laden season was the call-up of lock, Grant Gilchrist, to Scotland's starting XV against France on Saturday (pictured above playing for Edinburgh against Scarlets). The young No.4 acquitted himself well and didn't appear to be too overawed on the occasion of his first cap. Not once he'd got over the emotions of the Anthem, at least...

Another whitewash weekend for the Scotland International teams was the story from France. First up were the women who were playing in Dijon and seeking their first win in their 6 Nations Championship since beating France at Lasswade in 2010. It was not to be, however, and a clinical French side took 40

points off the visitors by half time and eventually won the match with a thirteen try score of 76-0. As usual, the Scots fought tooth and nail and had a few good passages of play, but were always swimming uphill against a far superior team. Scotland now have to try to qualify for the next World Cup via the FIRA competition in Madrid next month in a pool with Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands.

In Paris, the weather and a very soft pitch kept the scoring opportunities on the low side on Saturday. In spite of coming under the cosh from the French pack for a sustained period, Scotland went into the break 6-0 ahead courtesy of the ever reliable Greg Laidlaw. The score leapt to 9-6 for France within, what appeared to be, seconds of the second half starting from the boot of Freddie Michalak, but Laidlaw evened up the scoring with another penalty on the hour.

It was looking like a fairly tight run to the finish before first Fofana and then Medard scored two quick tries in the final 15 minutes, both converted by Michalak. Tim Visser popped up with two minutes to go to give Scots a try of their own, but by then the game was over, France taking the victory 23-16 and the Championship Wooden Spoon with only two points from their five matches. Pity they chose to turn up and play against us...

Scotland's Under-20's made a few changes for their match on Sunday against France's young guns and despite playing their best rugby of the series, they couldn't beat their French counterparts, coming away 13-10 down. The Scots were leading 10-3 at half time with a penalty from Tommy Allan and a converted try from Adam Ashe and Allan. The home side were under pressure for most of the match, but the 'Scot's disease' of not being able to convert pressure into points, came to the fore as the Scotland side couldn't quite break through the defence. France equalised with a try from a rare attack about 15 minutes from time and followed up a few minutes later with a penalty to take the match. Overall, a much improved campaign

from the Under-20 side this season, beating Italy and Ireland, and playing well enough to have won against England (beaten by a dodgy English try) and France. The match against Wales being the only real blip in, an otherwise, fine series.

The brief club news kicks off with a Brewin Dolphin Cup final triumph for Murrayfield Wanderers Under-18 women, who beat Community School of Auchterarder 28-18 on the International pitch at Murrayfield on Friday night. Boroughmuir continued their woeful season in the Premiership with a 34-14 defeat at Stirling County, a score which guarantees the Meggetland side National League rugby next season. On the other side of Edinburgh, things were a bit brighter as Edinburgh Accies beat Dundee 23-17 away from home and are currently fifth in the table, but safe.

Football

Hearts once again shocked everyone by handing Gary Locke the manager's job on a permanent basis 24 hours before he was due to lead the team in the Scottish Communities League Cup final as caretaker boss.

Hearts had spoken to Peter Houston and media reports suggested that the deal was done and dusted and would be announced today, however on Saturday the club confirmed that Locke would continue in the role.

Hearts director Sergejus Fedotovas said: -"We considered several people for the job and were close to making an appointment of what we believed to be the best of outside candidates, but it was Gary Locke who scored more points among the board members and now I believe that it is right that Gary, Edgaras and Darren continue to be given an opportunity to build on the work they have begun.

"Gary clearly has the same desire as a coach that he showed as a player for the club and with the support of Edgaras, Darren and the players he has an opportunity to deliver success to

the club.

“Our decision provides certainty to everyone through to the end of next season and reinforces the focus we all have in trying to achieve a special chapter in the history of this club on Sunday.”

Locke has been in charge for three Clydesdale Bank Premier League games, earning four valuable points after replacing John McGlynn who lost his job following four consecutive defeats.

He made 189 appearances for Hearts as a player and helped lift the Scottish Cup in 1998 as club captain, despite missing the final win over Rangers through injury.

✘ On Sunday, he led the team out at Hampden Park, and watched from the side-lines as Hearts took a well-deserved lead in the 10th minute following a deflected shot from Ryan Stevenson. Hearts then created several chances including a header from John Sutton which hit the post.

St Mirren then equalised against the run of play when Gary Teale beat the offside trap and drove into the Hearts' box before setting up Esmael Goncalves to slot the ball home into the empty net.

Lifelong Saints fan Steven Thompson added a second early in the second half, before Conor Newton made it three to silence the 26,000 Hearts fans in the National Stadium.

Hearts fought back and Stevenson hit the post, before scoring his and Hearts second with six minutes remaining.

Despite a late spell of pressure however, St Mirren held out and took the trophy for the first time in their history.

Hibs' chances of a top six finish took a setback on Friday when they lost 4-1 to Motherwell at Fir Park. Well's talisman

James McFadden inspired the Steelmen, scoring one and having a hand in the other three goals after Tom Taiwo opened the scoring in the first half with a close range header from a David Wotherspoon cross. The goal was Taiwo's first for Hibs, but will be of little consolation as the result leaves Hibs in 6th spot, ahead of Dundee United on goal difference, with two games remaining before the break.

After the game Pat Fenlon, who celebrated his 44th birthday yesterday, said:- "It was disappointing, we got what we deserved out of the game: nothing. We were lucky to be in the lead at half-time and in the second half we were very, very poor. McFadden was good, but we did not match their aggression or their work-rate in the second half.

"They got about us and we did not stand up to that. We conceded a goal and lost three in 15 minutes. That's happened to us a couple of times this season and it shouldn't happen. We have experienced players out there and when you concede a goal, particularly away from home, you have to be resilient and make sure you do not lose a second quickly. They'd started the game positively and we knew they'd come out for the second and have a go so you have to be strong mentally and physically as well. We gave away an early goal and then we looked nervous. We still have that opportunity to get into the top six, but we are definitely making it difficult for ourselves."

There was some good news however with the form of teenage winger Alex Harris who came on as a substitute, and also the news that versatile midfielder/defender Lewis Stevenson had agreed a new two year deal.

Hundreds of Hibs fans braved the terrible weather conditions to witness former captain Pat Stanton formally unveil a plaque to commemorate the birthplace of the club.

The plaque, which is set on Connemara Marble, reads "St Patrick's Parish, the Historic Home of Hibernian Football

Club. Hibernian FC was founded on 6th August 1875 by the then parish priest Father Edward Joseph Hannan and Michael Whelahan, member of the St Patrick's Church CYMS. Presented by the St Patrick's Branch of the Hibernian Supporters on 17 March 2013."

Also present were manager Pat Fenlon, Chairman Rod Petrie and the directors of the club. (A report on the event will be available on the Edinburgh Reporter website.)

Congratulations go to Leith's John Hughes who won the npower League One manager of the month award for February. The 48-year-old saw his relegation-threatened side go unbeaten throughout the month, moving them off the bottom of the table.

Pools beat Notts County, Leyton Orient, Scunthorpe and Crewe, while also picking up points in the games against Swindon and Portsmouth, as they ended the month six points from safety.

East of Scotland League

Heriot Watt's fixture with top of the table Spartans was postponed at the last minute after a lengthy downpour of rain made the pitch unplayable.

Elsewhere, in the Central Taxis' East of Scotland Premier Division, Civil Service Strollers lost 6-2 to high flying Stirling University in Stirling.

In the Central Taxis League Cup, Preliminary Round, Craigroyston travelled to the Borders and returned with a 2-1 victory over Coldstream.

Women's Football

Scotland claimed fifth place in the Cyprus Cup after beating Netherlands 1-0 on the final day.

Striker Kim Little put the Scots in front 11 minutes after Netherland's Mirte Roelvink had been sent off for a challenge

on winger Emma Mitchell.

This was an impressive result for Scotland who are ranked 14th in the world, whilst Netherlands are ranked 5th.

The Scots lost their first game 1-0 to New Zealand before drawing 4-4 with eventual winners England. They then beat Italy 2-1 before beating Netherland in the fifth / sixth play-off.

Hibs trio Frankie Brown, Shannon Lynn and Joelle Murray were part of the squad.

England beat Canada 1-0 in the final.



Spartans fought back from 2-0 down to beat Falkirk 4-2 after extra time at Ainslie Park on Saturday to secure a place in the second round of the Scottish Women's Premier League Cup match.

Falkirk's Emma Lyons gave the visitors a 1-0 half time lead before they doubled their advantage two minutes into the second half with Kerry Kennedy heading home inside the six yard box.

After 60 minutes, Sarah Ewens pulled one back for Spartans before Diana Barry secured extra time in the last minute.

Two quick goals in the second period of extra time through Ewens and Elliss Jenkins secured the victory.

Elsewhere Hibernian Ladies beat Aberdeen 4-0 at Albyn Park Broxburn.

Tennis

Tennis legend John McEnroe who won seven Grand Slams and was famous for his outbursts at umpires is set to take part in the

ATP Champions of Tennis tournament at Edinburgh Academicals home ground.

Organisers said they were delighted to secure an appearance by the 54 year-old American at the tournament, [which takes place in June](#), which is the first time it has been staged in Scotland. Other top tennis names are expected to be confirmed in the line-up in due course.

Boxing

Speaking of sporting legends, Edinburgh's Ken Buchanan has launched his new autobiography, 'Ken Buchanan – Adopted Legend' which has already sold out. The author Phil Jones' parents Myfanwy and Brynley looked after the young Ken when he left Edinburgh in 1965 for Merthyr Tydfil to turn professional and train with Eddie Thomas, who trained featherweight champ Howard Winstone.

Ken beat Ismael Laguna in Puerto Rico in September 1970 to become WBA lightweight champion, then defeated Ruben Navarro in Los Angeles in February 1971 for the WBC title.

He later successfully defended his title against Laguna but his next defence in June 1972, against Roberto Duran, ended controversially with the "below the belt" punch which led to Buchanan requiring surgery. Duran never took up Buchanan's offer to fight again.

In 1973, he beat future world lightweight champion Jim Watt in Glasgow to regain the British lightweight title, but immediately gave up the title so Watt could pursue it. He continued to fight abroad and eventually retired in 1983 although he continues to train every day at the Lochend Amateur Boxing Club and is only one pound heavier than when he fought.

Ice Hockey

The Edinburgh Capitals lost both games against the Fife Flyers in a weekend double header. On Saturday in the Kingdom, the Flyers won 5-1 then the following evening at Murrayfield, they won 4-2.

Speedway

Edinburgh Monarchs' Sam Masters is currently stuck in Australia trying to unravel problems with his visa. Although he meets all the criteria for entry to the UK, being an established rider in this country with an average to prove he is of suitable ability.

Work permits are no longer issued to allow speedway riders to come to this country, but instead they are issued with certificates of sponsorship to race here.

A change in rules during the winter that no one in British Speedway was aware of meant that instead of his passport arriving with the necessary visa stamp a letter of refusal arrived instead with an obscure reason given.

An appeal has been launched by Sam as he and officials at the Monarchs believe that the rules do not apply to him.

Sam remains confident that he will be in the team this season. The appeal was launched some days ago but UK Embassy officials are unable to say when it will be dealt with.

On a lighter note, at the first home event of the season every child entering the stadium will receive an Easter Egg from the Easter Bunny, and anyone who comes dressed as an Easter Bunny will be admitted to the stadium free and will be invited to watch the meeting from the hospitality suite.

Basketball

On Friday, the City of Edinburgh Kings beat the Stirling Knights 87-53 at the Peak in Stirling. Two days later, the City of Edinburgh Kool Kats beat Pentland Star 68-54 at

Broughton High School.

The Edinburgh cup is a triangular tournament with Edinburgh Jets and Edinburgh University competing in both the male and female competitions; NUVOC completed the women's draw and City of Edinburgh for the guys.

After a fantastic day's volleyball, the Jets won the men's title, whilst Edinburgh University won the women's

MVP awards were given to Barbara Terlouw of Edinburgh University and Chris McHardy of City of Edinburgh.

NUVOC, Linlithgow, Edinburgh University Bravehearts and Edinburgh University Claymores then took part in the 4-way competition.

Each team played two 45 minute matches, and the competition was refereed by Edinburgh University referees who were given feedback on how to improve. After the first round of games Linlithgow beat Edi Uni Bravehearts for the title of Edinburgh Uni district champions.

British University and College Sport

On Wednesday, Edinburgh University Firsts beat St Andrews University Firsts 93-34 in the Men's Basketball League. In the Men's Rugby Union League, Edinburgh University Firsts beat Birmingham Firsts 17-15.