

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up



This week, The Edinburgh Reporter sends our congratulations to Edinburgh Capitals for clinching a place in the Ice Hockey Play Offs, and also to Edinburgh Rugby following their first victory of the year. We also think a special mention should go to ten-year-old Lewis Betts and Liam McKay, 16, from Portobello IBC'S Junior section who won the national title in the Pairs at the Scottish Under-17 Championships at Garioch, Inverurie. Elsewhere, the Scotland football team's dismal World Cup qualifying campaign continued with a home defeat to Wales, and whilst there were no SPL games, there is still plenty going on at Tynecastle and Easter Road.

We also look forward to an exciting night of boxing next weekend at Meadowbank as well as providing the latest news on women's football, tennis, snooker, basketball and volleyball, and we remind you of the start of the speedway season and issue an appeal for help from the Monarchs.

Rugby by John Preece

Edinburgh secured their first win since December against Ulster on Friday. In a fairly closely fought match, the hosts went into the half-time break 6-3 ahead, but were put under great pressure early in the second half. Fortunately – or, depending on your loyalties, unfortunately – Ulster's kicker, Paddy Jackson repeated the 'nightmare with the boot' he suffered against Scotland and missed four relatively easy kicks. Edinburgh then took hold of the game and scored their try to go 11-3 ahead, before Ulster came back with one of their own via Andrew Trimble. Jackson missed the conversion

and a late penalty from Piers Francis gave Edinburgh the win, 14 points to 8.

✘ Edinburgh Rugby have also had a team accepted for the first Sevens Tournament of 2013 in Galashiels. The team will be announced after the tournament draw on the 24th March.

With Currie v Heriots at Maleny Park postponed due to a snow-bound pitch, the only Premiership match of interest was at Meggetland where Boroughmuir lost their 14th (that's FOURTEENTH!) match of the season, 24-10, to Edinburgh Accies.

A similar story was to be told in the National League where Stew-Mel didn't travel to Selkirk due to the weather, but Watsonians did make it through to Hamilton, where they went down 24-15.

Murrayfield Wanderers, playing in the Championship League B, won their match 27-15 at Lasswade.

The women's game picks up after a long lay-off, at the end of March, with all three Edinburgh teams, Watsonians, RHC and Murrayfield, involved in semi-final matches of the Sarah Beaney Cup.

The only Scotland news on the horizon is the Scotland Women who will play Netherlands Women in their first match of the FIRA-AER (Association Européenne Rugby) WRWC qualifiers in Madrid.

International Football

Edinburgh-born Gordon Strachan took charge of the Scotland international team for his first competitive game; a World Cup qualification tie against Wales at Hampden Park, but his hopes of becoming the first Scotland boss since Tommy Docherty in 1971 to win his first two games were dashed by two late Welsh goals, after new cap Grant Hanley had opened the scoring in injury time in the first half.

No current Edinburgh based players started the game, but three former Hibs stars featured. Gary Caldwell captained the team, whilst Steven Fletcher began up front, but lasted only 85 seconds before suffering an ankle injury and being replaced by former Hibs striker Kenny Miller.

The defeat leaves Scotland bottom of the group with only two points, and any slim hopes of qualifying are gone.

Elsewhere, Hibs midfielder Jorge Claros was on the substitutes' bench for Honduras in their 2-2 draw with Mexico. Manchester United's Chicharito Javier Hernandez scored twice for the Mexicans before two late goals levelled the scoring.

SPL Football

There were no SPL games this weekend due to the Internationals, but there was still plenty to talk about at Tynecastle and Easter Road.

Former Hearts boss John McGlynn has been linked with the vacant posts at both Falkirk and Livingston. The Bairns are looking for a new manager after the departure of former Hearts captain Steven Pressley, whilst Livingston are looking for a replacement for former Hibs star Gareth Evans. (Livingston have arranged a press conference for 10am today so watch this space)

Ex Hearts midfielder Lee Johnson has been named as the new manager of Oldham Athletic, becoming the youngest boss in the English football league. The 31-year-old, who made four appearances for Hearts in 2006 and was an outspoken critic of the club's owner Vladimir Romanov.

His first game came on Friday night and he started with a 3-0 win against former Hibs' boss John Hughes' Hartlepool.

Hearts fans who invested in the club's share issue should receive their shareholder certificates after the forthcoming

Annual General Meeting, due to take place in late April. The club raised £1.1million through the share issue, which ran from October 27 to December 19 last year, at a time when Hearts were threatened with closure due to unpaid tax bills.

Across the city, Hibs announced that tickets for the Scottish Cup Semi Final tie against Falkirk (13 April, KO 12.30pm) went on sale this Saturday 23 March at 10am from the Ticket Office.

Season Ticket Members for both the current and 13/14 campaign will be entitled to buy an unlimited amount of tickets during the priority period Saturday 23 March – Friday 29 March.

A general sale will commence at 10am, Saturday 30 March from the Ticket Office and offered on an unlimited basis, subject to availability. Ticket Prices; South Stand – £23; North Stand – £23; East Stand – £15 Adult / £5 Concessions (U16/065 and Ft Students)

The club also announced plans for a 'Ladies Day' which will be held at next week's home match against Inverness Caledonian Thistle. The ladies will receive a glass of bubbly on arrival, delicious two course meal, mini half time high tea and a warm welcome from Grant Stott as well as some expert advice from club partners including:-

The opportunity to watch the award winning hair maestro Simon Hill, from Sesh Hairdressing, provide a GHD master class to create two easy, on-trend looks and other treats from Virgin Active Health and Beauty Edinburgh, Kiehls of Edinburgh, Debenhams and Cupcake from Hideway Restaurant. A raffle to help raise funds for Breast Cancer Awareness will also take place.

Tickets are still available and anyone interested can find more details [on the club website.](#)

East of Scotland Football

Chic McAleavy has been sacked as manager of Civil Service Strollers.

The East of Scotland League Premier Division club took the decision following their 6-2 defeat from Stirling University last weekend. The Strollers are currently in a poor run of form, having lost four of their last five Premier Division games, conceding 15 goals and scoring seven, and, although they sit fourth, several teams below them are closing in with games in hand.

Early contenders for the job include former Spartans manager Sam Lynch, and ex Preston Athletic boss Stevie Myatt.

In the preliminary round of the East of Scotland League Cup, Edinburgh City beat Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale 3-1 whilst Edinburgh University lost 1-3 to Leith Athletic.

Midweek in the Central Taxis Premier Division, Stirling University moved to within two points of leaders Spartans after their 7-2 win against bottom club, Tynecastle, however on Saturday, the Ainslie Park side increased their lead with a 1-0 win over Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale at a bitterly cold Saughton Enclosure.



The winning goal came in the 63rd minute. Mark Whatley's corner kick found Ally MacKinnon at the back post, and his header flew into the top corner of the net.

Malt & Hops Man of the Match: Mark Whatley.

Elsewhere, at Meadowbank, Edinburgh City lost 1-0 Tynecastle.

In the Central Taxis First Division Craigroyston beat 4-1 Hawick.

Women's Football

Spartans Women started their league campaign with a 3-1 defeat to Glasgow City at Ainslie Park. Kirsty McLaughlin gave Spartans a 1-0 half time lead with a dipping shot, but the west coast side hit back after the break with goals from Lisa Robertson, Ruesha Littlejohn and Suzanne Malone to secure the points.

Elsewhere, Hibs Ladies fixture against Rangers was postponed due to adverse weather conditions.

Boxing

The 2013 ABS Scottish Championship Finals will take place on Friday 29 March 2013 in the Meadowbank Sports Centre. This is the most highly anticipated date on the 2013 Amateur Boxing Scotland Ltd calendar will feature the cream of Scottish Amateur Boxing talent who will be competing in a total of nine bouts.

☒ So far approximately half of the 1200 (500 bleacher and 100 ringside floor seats) available tickets have already been sold.

As was the case for the 2012 finals, spectators will not gain access to the facility through the main entrance. Instead, spectators will gain access to Meadowbank through the blues gates towards the rear of the car park and via the fire exits adjacent to the five aside football pitches. Once in the building spectators will be directed to the ticket gate.

Tickets will be available for purchase from the ABS Office (0845 241 7016) and can be collected and paid for at the ticket desk on the night. Please call now to avoid disappointment on the evening.

Spectators planning to attend are asked to be there early as a large crowd is anticipated.

Boxing commences 8.00pm

Basketball

The City of Edinburgh Kings beat Stirling Knights 78-50 at Portobello High School in the Scottish Basketball Men's League

Speedway

The Scotwaste Monarchs introduced their 2013 team to press and sponsors in Bathgate this weekend, but there were just six riders in the line-up.

Craig Cook, Theo Pijper, Derek Sneddon, Max Fricke, Jozsef Tabaka and Marcel Helfer lined up in the new race jacket, but the man who should have joined them, Sam Masters, is still in Australia.

Introducing the team, John Campbell said:- "We do have a very big problem with Sam who has been refused a visa because of a new rule. He is very unlucky and we feel very sorry for him. The club's local MP Michael Connarty has taken up his case and we have not given up, but of course we are now very close to the start of the season, and we can't start with six riders next Friday."

Danish rider Claus Vissing was in the room and discussions have now taken place with him, with a view to introducing him into the team in time for the opening fixture.

One important factor will be finding accommodation for Claus who wants to base himself in the area, so John Campbell asks:- "If anyone can help us out with accommodation that would be vital in coming to an agreement with Claus. Ideally he would be looking for workshop facilities also.

"We can be contacted on info@edinburghmonarchs.co.uk or on 07977 151612, and we do need to move quickly."

The practice session scheduled for Sunday evening was called off due to the snow in West Lothian and attempts will be made

to reschedule it. Exactly when this will happen, or even if it will happen, will depend on a much improved weather situation. An appropriate announcement will be made in due course.

All riders are disappointed at not getting on the track but Marcel Helfer was particularly keen to try out his new Armadale engine as set up by Peter Carr.

Ice Hockey

Congratulations go to the Edinburgh Capitals who reached the play-offs in dramatic style beating Dundee Stars 3-2 in Tayside on Saturday night. The Caps opened the scoring through Richard Hartmann in the 19th minute before Walker equalised for the Stars nine minutes later. The Stars then took the lead in the 41st minute through Maclean, but the Caps fought back and made the game all square when Brent Patry scored three minutes later. Hartmann sealed the famous victory in the 53rd minute.

The following night, the Stars travelled to Murrayfield, but once again the Caps were too strong. Curtis Leinweber gave the home side the lead in the third minute and Rene Jarolin added a second ten minutes later. The Stars pulled one back in the first minute of the second period, but Peter Holecko restored the two goal advantage before Stars again fought back with a goal in the 11th minute of the third period. Brent Patry secured the victory in the last minute to the delight of the Caps fans who are now looking forward to a trip down south next month.

The Rapid Solicitors Elite League annual play-off finals weekend will take place at the National Ice Centre in Nottingham on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 April 2013.

This year's play-offs will be the 10th anniversary in the Elite League era since its inception in 2003-04.

Tennis

Organisers of a legends' tennis tournament coming to the Capital this summer are expecting the contest to become a permanent annual fixture.

The four-day Brodies Champions of Tennis competition will make its city debut in Stockbridge in June, with former world number one John [McEnroe already signed up](#).

The ATP Champions Tour event being held at Edinburgh Academicals' home ground will bring together some of the most successful players in tennis history, with the next major signing expected to be announced next week.

A temporary 2500-seater stadium will be built at Raeburn Place to host players and spectators after previous plans to hold the tournament at Inverleith Park were ruled out over flooding issues.

Six-time grand slam semi-finalist Tim Henman has been billed as a potential participant along with Pat Cash, Mats Wilander and Boris Becker.

The June 20-23 tournament will finish a day before the start of Wimbledon, with organisers keen to profit from the interest surrounding Britain's grand slam event. Tickets for the Edinburgh tournament went on sale yesterday.

EventScotland and Edinburgh City Council are contributing £100,000 to staging the event.

Athletics

✘ Allan Wells' former sprint rival Pietro Mennea has died aged 60. The Italian athlete-turned-politician enjoyed a friendly rivalry with Wells and prevented him winning double gold in Moscow, by beating the Scot in the 200m by 0.02 seconds. Mennea held the world record set in Mexico in 1968 for an incredible 17 years. Wells is pictured left on The Mound last summer.

Snooker

Edinburgh's Lee Mein reached the last 16 of the European Under-21 Snooker Championships in Bor, Serbia.

Mein was second in his group with four wins out of five after beating Balázs Köles (Slovakia) 3-0 before losing his final match to Ireland's Ryan Cronin.

The loss meant Mein had to play an extra qualifying match, beating Nathanaël Beckrich (France) 4-2 to reach the last 32.

He then beat Siarhei Melnichonak (Belarus) 3-0 before losing out to Duane Jones (Wales) 4 – 3.

Bowls

Many congratulations to ten-year-old Lewis Betts and Liam McKay, 16, from Portobello IBC'S junior section who produced a fantastic performance to win the national title in the Pairs at the Scottish Under-17 Championships at Garioch, inverurie.

The pair were in a tough qualifying section but wins over Buchan, Blantyre and Dumbarton earned them full points and a place in the final where they beat a more experienced Prestwick partnership of Dawn Anderson and Andy Weir 6-2 to take the trophy.

Portobello were runners up in the Triples with Chloe Thomson, Ross Thomson and Dean Mackintosh just losing out by Abbeyview in the final.

Elsewhere Portobello IBC'S ladies team narrowly failed to clinch promotion to the Premier after losing their play-off match against Whiteinch (Glasgow) 80-72 at Blantyre.

Volleyball

In the Schelde Sports Men's National League Division One Edinburgh Jets beat Bon Accord 3-0, 25-17, 25-17, 25-17,

whilst City of Edinburgh travelled to Ayrshire and beat Kilmarnock Blaze 3-0 21-25, 22-25, 23-25. These results leave City of Edinburgh on top of the table with 42 points from 14 games, six points ahead of the Jets.

In the Schelde Sports Women's National League Division One, NUVOC beat South Ayrshire 3-0, 25-21 25-16, 25-16 whilst the City of Edinburgh beat Troon Team Ayrshire 3-1 in Troon, 19-25, 25-22, 10-25 17-25.

In the Schelde Sports Men's National League Division Two, City of Edinburgh II beat Edinburgh Jets III 3-0, 8-25, 20-25, 16-25.