

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up



This week, the Edinburgh Reporter congratulates the Edinburgh Scotwaste Monarchs for their stunning start to the speedway season, and also to Hearts for a sensational comeback against Ross County at Tynecastle. We report on the Edinburgh connection to the Grand National winner 66/1 outsider Auroras Encore, and send our best wishes to winning jockey Ryan Mania who was airlifted to hospital after a horror fall at Hexham on Sunday. We also send a good luck message to Hibs, ahead of next week's Scottish Cup semi-final against Falkirk at Hampden.

Rugby by John Preece

With no RaboDirect matches this week – European Cup weekend and all that – Edinburgh Rugby entered a scratch team into the Gala Sevens at Netherdale. Showing a distinct lack of practice, they went down 24-17 to Heriots, before coming back with a 27-12 win over Peebles to earn a place in the Bowl Semi-final. Here they defeated Jed-Forest 27-12 and then went on to sweep Watsonians, who had beaten Currie in their Semi-final, aside 40-0 in the Final.

On a slightly 'out there' note, Edinburgh's Southern hemisphere alter-ego city, Dunedin (Dùn Èideann), are the home of the Highlanders Rugby Union team. If it was thought that Edinburgh Rugby were having a tough time of it this season, then spare a thought for our Southern counterparts. A team, which is stuffed full of All-Blacks and other International players are currently lying fifteenth out of fifteen in the Super Fifteen (spot the theme here) Championship with six defeats from six! Struggling Edinburgh were two from six at

the beginning of their season, but then it all went a bit downhill after that...

In the RBS Premier Division, the results from the matches noted last week have decided the final table places. Edinburgh Academy are in third and have a place in the British and Irish Cup. Heriots went from fourth to fifth, so lose their B+I Cup place. Currie drop to eighth, so stay up in the Division, but poor old Boroughmuir are relegated to the National League, where they will join Watsonians (third) and Stewarts-Melville (sixth).

Looking ahead, next week sees the 123rd edition of the Melrose Sevens. All six of Edinburgh's senior teams are entered and the whole event – which is where the game was 'invented' and is the oldest tournament in the World – is a superb advertisement for Sevens Rugby. The Reporter will be there to bring news of how the teams get on, along with a few photographs from the relevant matches. However with Saracens, Worcester and Clermont Auvergne all having teams in the mix, it will be a fairly steep mountain for the local sides to climb to the final. (Photo – Stew-Mel scoring against Biggar in the 2011 Tournament).

And finally, Hillhead-Jordanhill lift the Sarah Beeny Cup at Murrayfield, beating RHC Cougars 22-20 after a last minute try scored by H-J's Megan Gaffney.

Football

Three goals in an amazing five minutes at Tynecastle enabled Hearts to fight back from 2-1 down to beat Ross County 4-2.

Steffen Wohlfarth put the visitors in front, before Michael Ngoo nodded Hearts level just after the break only for Wohlfarth to regain the lead for the Staggyies with a powerful header. Jason Holt equalised with a stunning volley, then Evangelos Ikonomou's own goal put Hearts ahead and Ngoo netted his second with a low strike to secure the three points, to

the delight of the majority of the 10,456 crowd.

Across the country, Hibs hopes of a top six finish vanished as Pat Fenlon's men went down 3-0 to champions elect Celtic at Parkhead. The Easter Road side needed a combination of results to go their way to secure a top six finish, but it was not to be. A Kris Commons' double either side of half time then a Mikael Lustig strike late on gave the Hoops a comfortable win which all but seals the SPL title.

The results leave Hibs three points ahead of Hearts with a superior goal difference of four. The bottom six fixture list will be produced shortly and all eyes will be on the date and location of the fourth Edinburgh Derby which is likely to be at Tynecastle.

In midweek, the Hibs v Hearts mini derby ended 2-2 at Linlithgow's Prestonfield Park. After a goal-less first half, Hearts took the lead through Dale Carrick before Jordan Forster equalised. Billy King restored Hearts' lead before Robert Wilson levelled the scoring and the game finished all square, leaving Hibs three points clear of their city rivals in the Clydesdale Bank U20 League.

✘ Off the field, Hibs have announced that 14,500 tickets have been sold for the Scottish Cup semi-final clash with Falkirk at Hampden Park next Saturday. Further tickets are available from the club shop.

Hibs striker Eoin Doyle has signed a pre-season contract with Chesterfield, teaming up with former Sligo Rovers manager Paul Cook.

Hearts' owner Vladimir Romanov, who previously demanded £50 million for the Edinburgh club, has admitted he does not expect to make any profit from the sale, following the collapse of his banking empire and loss of his personal

fortune.

Mr Romanov claims to have spent around £60m on Hearts since buying the club in October 2005, but now plans to sell control to supporters.

East of Scotland Football

In midweek, Heriot-Watt University blew the race for the Central Taxis Premier Division championship wide open after they won 2-0 against current champions Stirling University. Two goals from Ronnie Napier in the closing stages of the first half secured all three points to help in their fight against relegation.

In the First Division, Leith Athletic won 4-1 victory against Ormiston after trailing at half time, but Craigroyston's promotion hopes were dashed when they were beaten 1-0 at home by Easthouses Lily in a game which saw both teams finish with nine men, with Danny Watson and Jamie Shields red-carded for Easthouses while Jordan Low and Steve Moncur were both sent off for Craigroyston.

Elsewhere, Gretna 2008 continued with their run of good form beating Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale 2-1 at Saughton Enclosure

On Saturday, Tynecastle lost 4-0 to Preston Athletic in the third round of the Kings Cup, and Leith Athletic beat Craigroyston 5-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in the first round of the Central Taxis League Cup.

In the Central Taxis Premier Division, Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale beat Civil Service Strollers 3-0 at Muirhouse, and Spartans extended their lead at the top of the league by beating Edinburgh City at Meadowbank.

Mark Whatley opened the scoring in the 38th minute before Keith McLeod almost doubled the lead a few moments later when

his strike from 40 yards rattled the bar and went over.

With four minutes remaining, McLeod headed a cross towards the goal and sub Donal Henretty reacted quickest to poke the ball into the net, securing a valuable victory. Malt & Hops Man of the Match: Gary Cennerazzo

Last years' champions Stirling University lost 1-0 to Vale of Leven.

The Under 13 squad from top Danish club Viborg FF are over in Edinburgh this weekend using the Ainsley Park Academy as their base. They arrived on Thursday for a training session and the following day comfortably beat Dundee in a friendly. The youngsters trained over the weekend, visited Celtic Park for the Hibs game on Saturday and enjoy Edinburgh before taking on Dundee United on Monday with an 11am ko.

Charity Matches

A Hearts Legends team including Jimmy Sandison, Henry Smith, Gary Mackay, Scott Crabbe, Alan McLaren, Brian McNaughton, Jim Hamilton, Ian Ferguson and Edgaras Jankauskas took part in a charity match against a team from Aegon Charity Committee on Sunday at Hearts' Football Academy in Riccarton. Funds raised went to Ecas Edinburgh, FACE, Pancreatic Cancer UK and the Big Hearts Community Trust.

The legends won 5-4

A charity match in honour of Hutchison Vale coach Alan McConnell who lost his brave fight to cancer last month aged 51, will take place at Redhall Park on Saturday April 20 with all proceeds going to Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Alan played for several clubs and was an outstanding centre-forward who was a well-known figure in the amateur game. Latterly, he coached Hutchison Vale Under 13s, and in his last season before he passed away, his side won everything

including the Scottish Cup.

After the game there will be a buffet at the Village Inn in Longstone. For more information on how to make a donation, please contact Davy Winton on 07775854121

Women's Football

Two Hibs' players, goalkeeper Shannon Lynn and defender Frankie Brown played for Scotland in their 2-1 win over Wales at East End Park Dunfermline on Sunday.

Scotland women team Lynn (GK), Beattie, Brown, Crichton, Jones, Lauder, Little (Cpt), Love, Mitchell, J Ross, Sneddon

Speedway

The Scotwaste Edinburgh Monarchs started the speedway season in style with a 59-31 win over Glasgow Tigers in the first leg of the Spring Trophy, with Craig Cook and Theo Pijper both scoring paid maximums.

✘ Other good performances came from Jozsef Tabaka scoring 9+1, Claus Vissing 8+2, Derek Sneddon 7+1 and Marcel Helfer 5+1 whilst newcomer, 16 year old Max Fricke scored 2 + 1.

Cook (heat 1), Pijper (heat 5) and Bager (heat 14) all won races from the back.

Armadale's new starting gate position, which allows fans to see the riders at the gate, went down well with the crowd.

The Monarchs next fixture is against Leicester Lions at Armadale on Friday 12 April in the Premier league Knockout Cup.

Grand National

66/1 outsider Auroras Encore, partly owned by 78-year-old Jim Beaumont, who was born in Liverpool and worked in the city's Adelphi Hotel as a bellboy at the age of 14 and now lives in

the Dean Village, was the shock winner of the Grand National at Aintree on Saturday. Galashiels born jockey Ryan Mania rode the horse to victory on his first appearance in the race. Trainer Sue Smith, wife of show jumper Harvey, was the third woman to train a National winner.

Mr Beaumont's other horse Mr Moonshine pulled up near the finish after a credible performance.

Ice Hockey

Some good news for the Edinburgh Capitals as 24 year old Slovakian goalie Tomas Hladovsky, has agreed a deal with the club that will see him return to Murrayfield for the 2013-14 season.

University Basketball

England retained both titles in the British Universities 4 Nations Basketball Championships which took place over three days at The Pleasance Sports Centre.

Scotland Men got off to a great start on the first day of the British Universities 4 Nations Championships, beating Wales 91-43. Canadian forward Al Alilovic led the home scoring with 26 points whilst Fraser Glass (West of Scotland) added 17 and Ryan Webb (Edinburgh) scored 15.

The Scots then fought back from 39-45 down at half-time to beat Northern Ireland 83-73 with Edinburgh's Michael Kirkpatrick scoring 24 points to set up a decider against England.

Scotland men led for much of the first half and went into the half-time break tied 38-38, but England pulled away in the third quarter in which they hit 34 points to Scotland's 11 and, though Scotland tied the final quarter 15-15, England went on to win 87-64, led by captain Kalil Irving with 21 points.

Al Alilovic (Glasgow) was top home scorer with 15, Edinburgh centre Ryan Webb added 12, Fraser Glass (West) and Chris Alimi (Glasgow Caledonian) both 10 and skipper Michael Kirkpatrick (Edinburgh) nine.

In the women's tournament, Wales caused a surprise by beating Scotland 70-53. The Scots recovered however and beat Northern Ireland 70-58 with Polonia's Claire Paxton scoring an impressive 24 points. Four members of Edinburgh Kool Kats also featured in the scorers, Shauna O'Connor with 11, Louise Gray eight, Emma Findlay six and Hannah Peacock five.

In the final game, Scotland had to beat England by 16 points to take the title and led 37-35 at half-time then 52-49 after the third quarter, but England fought back to win 71-63 winners, led by the tournament's Most Valuable Player Helen Naylor, who scored 36 points.

Final positions: Men: 1 England, 2 Scotland, 3 N Ireland, 4 Wales. Women: 1 England, 2 Wales, 3 Scotland, 4 N Ireland

Hockey

Inverleith beat Edinburgh rivals Grange 4-2 in the quarter final of the Scottish Cup.

Grange led 1-0 at Peffermill through Cammy Fraser but Paul Ritchie equalised before half-time before goals from Tom Cousins, Adam Mackenzie and Patrick Christie netted a fourth to end the game as a contest. Stuart Laing pulled one back for Grange, but Inverleith held on to secure a place in the last four.

Golf

Former Duddingston assistant professional Tom Buchanan beat fellow Scots Steven Munro and Callum Nicoll to win the UAE Matchplay Championship at Jumeirah Golf Estates, holing a 20 foot putt on the 18th green in the final to secure the top

prize.

Cycling

A strong field lined up for the elite event in Saturday's Gifford Road Races, hosted by Edinburgh Road Club. The 65-mile contest, which started at 1pm in Gifford, also incorporated the East of Scotland Championship. The main event was preceded by a 40-mile support race. The prize winners in both events are listed below.

Winner was Andrew Hawdon of Herbalife-Leisure Lakes Bikes.com in a time of 02:30:48

Kevin Barclay of The Bicycleworks.com won the ESCA Senior Cycling Champion of 2013

Alex Coutts of Herbalife-Leisure Lakes Bikes.com won the Category 2 riders prize.

Alan Clark of the Team Leslie Bike Shop/Bikers Boutique won the Category 3 prize.

Jamie Kennedy of Paisley Velo Race Team won the V40+ Caetgory Riders.

Kyle Petrie of the Stirling Bike Club won the Juniors.

Andrew Hawdon of the Herbalife-Leisure Lakes Bikes.com won the KOM Primes.

Evan Oliphant of Team Raleigh won the Sprint Primes.

Edinburgh claimed first and second spots in the B Race (Cat 4 Men & E/1/2/3/4 Ladies)

Alex Kinsley of Edinburgh RC won the race in a time of 01:37:27. Second place went to Keir Greatorex also of Edinburgh RC.

Mona Petrie of Deeside Thistle CC won the Ladies Prize.

Alex Kinsley of Edinburgh RC also won the Juniors Prize, with Keir Creatorex second.

Jack Taylor of Dumfries CC won the KOM Primes.

Calum Gray of Equipe Velo Ecosse/Montpeliers won the Sprint Primes.