

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up



Normally the Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up starts with rugby, but not this week as we send out congratulations to Pat Fenlon and his players for reaching the William Hill Scottish Cup Final after a sensational comeback from 3-0 down to beat Falkirk after extra time at Hampden Park on Saturday. This result means that Hibs will play in back to back Scottish Cup Finals for the first time since 1923/24.

Also a big 'well done' to everyone who braved the inclement weather to take part in the Rock and Roll Half Marathon.

Football

Over 17,000 Hibs fans made the trip to the national stadium, but they were stunned to be three goals down after 30 minutes, however a spirited second half performance with goals from teenage winger Alex Harris, Leigh Griffiths and Eoin Doyle levelled the score-line, before man of the match Griffiths sealed a famous victory with a stunning 30 yard strike near the end.

After the game, an emotionally drained Pat Fenlon said:- "It was a horrendous first half, but we showed tremendous character and played really well after that. It wasn't much of a team talk and more of a rant, but it worked. But, in fairness to the players, they knew they'd let themselves down and the fans. I felt like leaving myself at half-time. It was difficult to watch and difficult to take and I apologise to the supporters for that first half – and that's down to me."

"We put everybody through the wringer today but have shown tremendous character. The players themselves had plenty to say

at half-time, but it was a tremendous comeback.”

“But what they have shown is that there’s massive, massive character within the group and they’ve shown that in spades – and that end of the game was different class.”

“Young Danny (Handling) and Alex (Harris) were different class for us and it was difficult for them to come on when we were chasing the game. Leigh Griffiths doesn’t miss too many penalties, but we just got back to passing the ball after that. Today wasn’t Leigh’s best game for us, but the finish for the goal, that’s him. He doesn’t let things like that bother him and he’s got a great attitude. I’m delighted for him too because he’s Hibs-daft and wanted to be in the final; we’re there now.

“We’ve got five big league games to show that desire again too. We’ve had some tremendous games this year: Hearts in the first round and Aberdeen, Kilmarnock and now Falkirk; we’ll worry about the final and see what happens then.”

Hibs will face Celtic in the Final after another epic semi at the national stadium on Sunday. Kris Commons gave the Hoops an early lead, but Dundee United fought back and took the lead through goals from Gary Mackay-Stevens and Jon Daly. Celtic equalised through Victor Wanyama, before Commons added his second and Celtic’s third, but a late Jon Daly header sent the tie into extra time.

Former Hibs striker Anthony Stokes scored Celtic’s fourth with a bullet header in the 11th minute, and Celtic held on to make the final an all green affair.

Jamie Walker was voted Hearts’ Young Player of the Year at the club’s annual awards ceremony at Tynecastle.

The winger, who has broken into the first team this season and earned a call-up to the Scotland Under-21 squad, was presented with his award by Hearts manager Gary Locke, above. The

Under-20s prize went to midfielder Callum Tapping, while Angus Beith took the Under-17s player of the year award.

Gary Stoddart received the George Nicolson Recognition Award for his coaching role with the club's Academy despite battling serious illness.

Hearts are bidding to fill Tynecastle for their next home match by dropping all ticket prices to £5 for the visit of St Mirren on Saturday, May 4.

East of Scotland Football

In the Central Taxis Premier Division, Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale beat Edinburgh University 2-0, whilst Heriot Watt went down by the same score-line away to Gretna.

Civil Service Strollers lost 4-0 away to Vale of Leithen, and Edinburgh City lost 2-0 to Whitehill Welfare.

In the First Division, Leith Athletic travelled to the Borders and returned with full points after beating Kelso 4-2, and Craigroyston beat Selkirk 2-1.

Spartans secured their place in the Central Taxis' League Cup semi-final with a convincing 5-1 victory over Tynecastle at Ainslie Park.

Spartans took the lead in the 13th minute, when Mark Whatley's shot hit Robbie Manson who slotted the ball home. Willie Bremner doubled the lead in the 20th minute when he rounded the keeper and rolled the ball into the net, before Tynecastle got themselves back into the game in the 38th minute when Daryl Burdett headed into the net from a corner kick. Tynecastle's Nyancho Manneh was shown a straight red card in the 62nd minute after slapping Kevin Motion, and with 15 minutes remaining Gary Cennerazzo sealed the win when his shot beat Banaszynski in the Tynecastle goal.

Three minutes later Donal Henretty pounced on a mistake by the

Tynecastle keeper to score a fourth then sub Andy Martin poked the ball home from a few yards out for a fifth.

Malt & Hops Man of the Match: Gary Cennerazzo

Women's Football

✘ Spartans beat Falkirk 4-0 at Ainslie Park. Reilly opened the scoring with a header from a Ewens' cross then added a second from a Barry pass. Reilly got her hat-trick in the 56th minute after heading home a Marshall free-kick and Marshall completed the scoring firing into the bottom corner from a Jenkins' through ball.

Elsewhere, Hibs Ladies beat Celtic 3-2 thanks to goals from Caroline Weir, Siobhan Hunter and Susan Fairley. After the game a delighted Joelle Murray tweeted; "So proud of my teammates today. They battled together and kept running until the final whistle and showed great team spirit."

Louise Kerr, Toni Bertram and Lia Tweedie scored for Hibs Development team who beat Boroughmuir Development 3-1 in the League Cup Division Two at Meggetland

Rugby by John Preece

...will start off with a correction to last week's report where it was stated that Edinburgh Accies finished third in the Premier Division. They did, in fact, finish in fourth place, but still qualify for the British and Irish Cup. Apologies to Stirling County who actually finished the season in third.

And a bit more action this week as Edinburgh played their second last home match of the season against Connacht. The big question was 'Could they make it three in a row?' The big – and short – answer was 'No!' Connacht have come a long way in the last few years and are no longer the whipping boys of the 'Celtic' sides. They had Edinburgh on the back foot for long periods and were really the only side that looked likely to

score a try. This feat they managed twice to Edinburgh's none on the way to their 32-24 victory, in spite of Greg Laidlaw's eight from nine penalty success. Lion's call-up?

This result was in league with that of The Highlanders from Dunedin in New Zealand, who were soundly beaten by the Brumbies 30-19 in the Super 15's but managed to retain their fifteenth place in the table.

A great day's seven-a-side rugby was on offer on Saturday at the Melrose Sevens (<http://www.melrose7s.com/> and is where the results, etc. can be found. With no Southern hemisphere teams making the trip this year, it fell to Europe to supply the 'class acts' with Saracens, Worcester and Clermon Auvergne all entering teams. In addition, India had entered a development team with an eye on next year's Commonwealth games. In all, 24 teams went into the draw, including all six of Edinburgh's major clubs, with only Heriots making it through in the draw to the second round, the other five teams having to go through preliminary first round matches.

Boroughmuir and Watsonians went through to join Heriots, but only Heriots made it any further. Boroughmuir went down fighting to Worcester and Watsonians lost out to hosts, Melrose.

In the Quarter-finals, Heriots came up against English Premiership side, Saracens, and were comprehensively beaten 31-10.

At least they can say they were beaten by the overall winners. Saracens met French side, Clermont Auvergne in a thrilling final, which the English team won 24-22 with an overtime try and conversion.

Edinburgh Rock and Roll Half Marathon.

A huge 'well done' to everyone who braved the dismal weather conditions and ran in the Edinburgh Rock and Roll Marathon on

Sunday.

The race was first run in 2010 as the Chris Hoy Edinburgh Half Marathon and was a great success, raising money for numerous local and national charities. The race looks set to be a regular annual feature, allowing runners to enjoy the scenery of Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth coastline. It started in Meadowbank Stadium, and from there the route took the runners away from the centre of Edinburgh towards the coast at Portobello before heading southwards to the finish line at Musselburgh Racecourse.

The first man home was Bryan Mackie in a time of 1.15.24, followed by Robert Watson on 1.18.24 then Robert Weston on 1.19.00

The winning woman was Holly Rush who completed the course in 1.21.52. Second was Christy Gelineau on 1.23.14 and third Danielle Sansonetti on 1.28.44

Speedway

Edinburgh Scotwaste Monarchs took a 27-point lead in the first leg of their knockout cup tie against Leicester, on a cold, wet night Friday night in Armadale.

DDS Monarch of the Match award was won by Hungarian Jozsef Tabaka. was unbeaten from his first five rides, including the race of the night against Lasse Bjerre in heat 12.

Claus Vissing had another excellent meeting, as did Craig Cook.

The following night, the Monarchs travelled to Leicester where they lost by two points to take the tie comfortably 102-77.

Their away fixture against Glasgow Tigers, scheduled for Sunday night was postponed.

Meanwhile the Monarchs' hopes of gaining a visa reprieve for

stranded Australian star Sam Masters are diminishing fast. His visa expired in November and he must wait 12 months before applying for a new permit.

Basketball

City of Edinburgh Kings will meet Edinburgh Lions in the Lothian Men's Basketball Cup Final on Saturday, May 4, after both sides won their semi-finals at Portobello High School last weekend.

Kings defeated Wolves 73-66 whilst the Lions disposed of Edinburgh and Borders Police 75-41.

In the Women's tournament, City of Edinburgh Kool Kats lost 55-48 to Comets who will play Midlothian Saints in the final.

On Sunday the Kings beat Glasgow University 81-54 at the Emirates Arena in the Senior Men's League.

Elsewhere, basketballscotland have announced a new partnership with The University of Edinburgh to deliver a High Performance Basketball Programme for female athletes in the 2013-14 season.

The partnership will create the first High Performance Basketball Programme for University-aged female athletes here in Scotland, giving players the opportunity to develop their skills alongside completing their academic studies at one of the world's leading Universities. For the first time, Scottish female athletes will have a structured, progressive and well-resourced home-based alternative to other programmes in the UK, Europe or the rest of the World, if they are serious about continuing their improvement in basketball at university.

Details of the programme will be developed over the coming months, in advance of the 2013-14 season.

Athletics

Professional athletics is returning to Meadowbank, with promoter Frank Hanlon launching a new meeting, the Meadowbank Games, to be held on the evening of Friday, June 21.

Prizes range from £250 for first in the 100 metres open handicap and £200 for first in a scratch 110 metres race to £75 for first in five youth handicap races, ranging from 100 metres to 1600 metres. In all there are 17 events and entries will close on June 1.

The famous New Year Sprint which moved briefly to Meadowbank from Powderhall then moved to Musselburgh Racecourse in December 1999 due to the cost of hiring the facilities.

Boxing

Edinburgh boxer Craig McEwan has signed a three-year contract with New York boxing promoter Lou DiBella. Craig lived in Los Angeles for seven years before returning home to his native Scotland last year.

The 31 year old middleweight's fight with Huddersfield's Alastair Warren at Kilmarnock's Grand Hall on Saturday ended in a draw after the Englishman picked up a cut after an accidental clash of heads in the first round.

Golf

Lothians did well to earn a 5-5 draw with Stirlingshire at Glenbervie.

Graham Robertson, (Silverknowes), Anthony Blaney (Liberton), Calum Hill (Tantallon) and Gary Corrigan (Greeburn) all won for the visitors with Benn McLeod (Musselburgh) and Ross Noon (Craigielaw) both earning half points.

Hockey

Inverleith lost 3-0 to Grovehill Menzies at Peffermill on Saturday in the semi-finals of the Men's Arthur McKay Scottish

Cup Final. Menzies will play Glynhill Hotel Kelburne in the final on Saturday 25 May.

Inverleith had appealed to Scottish Hockey to change the date of the game but a compromise was reached with a noon start which allowed several players to attend a wedding.

Volleyball

The inaugural Final 4 Playoffs took place at Wishaw Sports Centre, featuring a total of 14 matches with Division 1 and 2 Teams fighting for the right to call themselves Playoff Champions

On Saturday, in the Men's Final 4 Playoffs, Edinburgh Jets beat Kilmarnock Blaze 3-2; 25-22, 22-25, 20-25, 25-21, 13-15. City of Edinburgh beat Bon Accord 3-0; 25-12, 25-14, 25-19

In the Women's Final 4 Playoffs, City of Edinburgh beat Edinburgh Jets 3-1; 25-22, 16-25, 25-19, 25-11.

In the Division 2 Final Playoffs NUVOC lost 2-3 to Dundee; 25-20, 25-21, 10-25, 16-25, 13-15. Edinburgh Jets II beat Glasgow International 3-1; 23-25, 26-24, 25-14, 25-23. City of Edinburgh II lost 3-2 to Bellshill Cardinals; 25-21, 25-20, 22-25, 22-25, 12-15.

American Football

The Edinburgh Wolves American football team celebrate their tenth anniversary this year and look to mark the occasion by bringing home the 2013 national championship title.

The Wolves beat Clyde Valley Blackhawks 26-0 on Sunday at Meadowbank Stadium. in the first game of the new season.

They, who compete in the National Northern Division of the British American Football Association National League (BAFANL), and are current Division champions, but fell to defeat in the play-off semi-finals to eventual winners the

Sheffield Predators last August.

Swimming

Fifteen year old Duncan Scott set a new Scottish junior and British age group record in the 50m freestyle at last night's Scottish Gas National Championships at Edinburgh's Royal Commonwealth Pool.

The youngster set a new mark of 23.75 in the one length race, having minutes earlier won the 200m backstroke in 2:09.80

Elsewhere, three-time Olympian Caitlin McClatchey (Edinburgh University) also had to settle for silver in the 50m freestyle (26.54) behind Carnegie's Eloise Barber (26.48).

Warrender's Craig McNally took the 17 and over 200m backstroke (2:02.45), while Katie Stark won the 14 years (27.36) and Richard Schafers the 17 and over (23.23) 50m freestyle

High Jump

High Jump athlete, Allan Smith, currently in America completing his winter training in a warmer climate, has won his first outdoor competition of the season at the US National Training Center Throws & Jumps Meet #6 in Clermont, Florida.

His winning leap of 2.17m was also the Scottish team qualifying standard height for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow 2014.