

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



This week, the Edinburgh Reporter sends congratulations to Edinburgh who beat Italian club Zebre, Spartans for reaching the semi-final of the Kings Cup, and Hibernian Ladies for a sensational result against their rivals Spartans.

We also send our best wishes to Sir Chris Hoy who has been caught up in an earthquake in Taiwan, and commiserations to the Bainfield Bowling Club trio who lost out in the final of the Scottish Indoors Bowling Championships Triples in Fraserburgh.

There was no joy for either capital club on Saturday with Hibs losing 2-1 to Inverness Caledonian Thistle at Easter Road whilst Hearts went down 2-0 to Aberdeen at Pittodrie, results that are likely to see both clubs in the bottom six after the split.

Rugby by John Preece

A fairly good news week for Edinburgh this week with the announcement of the signing, on a two year deal, of winger Nicky Walker from Worcester Warriors. Plying the majority of his trade in Southern climes – well, Wales and England – Walker has also amassed 24 Scotland caps. This signing gives Edinburgh the option of two huge wingers in Walker and Visser, who, respectively, lie fourth and equal top in the all-time 'Celtic League' try scoring table.

This was followed up by the news of Nick de Luca's 13-week suspension for a dangerous tackle being reduced to eight weeks – arrived at by some complicated maths, it would appear. This means that de Luca will be available for selection from the

15th April, so should play a further role in this year's RaboDirect league.

Final 'good news' news was Edinburgh's win in Italy over bottom club, Zebre. The match was a bit of a slog in the wet, muddy conditions, which proved to be a great leveller in the end. Edinburgh opened and closed the first half with two penalties from Greg Laidlaw, but this was overshadowed by Zebre's try midway through the half. Ben Atiga, at last, showed a bit of 'All Black-ness' with a 50 metre break up the centre, followed by a neat round-the-back pass to the following Talei, but again the conditions got in the way and the play broke down,

With the first half proving to be a bit error-ridden, the teams came out for the second expecting more of the same. However, Edinburgh's experience and fitness came to the fore and they had the majority of the ball and territory. Laidlaw scored another penalty and both he and Tonks were held up in the process of scoring a try. The only real scare for the visitors was in the last five minutes when an attempted drop kick from Orquera hit the cross bar, which if it had gone over, would probably have sealed the match. It didn't and Edinburgh held on to win, an agonisingly close, nine points to seven.

Given the condition of the pitch and consequent lack of great rugby, the highlight of the BBC Alba coverage must have been when the Zebre hooker went to collect the ball from the ball boy and proceeded to wipe his great, big muddy paws all over the youngster instead of using the proffered towel! Classy...

The only match of note involving Edinburgh clubs this weekend was the rescheduled game at Malleny Park between Currie and Heriots in the second last regular weekend of the RBS Premiership. With Currie second bottom, it was a match they really had to win to have a chance of avoiding the play-offs for a relegation spot to accompany Boroughmuir down to the

National League.

Heriots for their part, were not only playing for a British and Irish Cup place, but were, as the only First Division/Premiership/etc. team who have never been relegated. playing their 600th Senior League match.

However, for long periods of the first half, on another fairly muddy pitch, it looked like Heriots were the team at the bottom as Currie went into half time 13-3 ahead via a converted try and two penalties. Heriots staged a massive comeback in the second half with the majority of possession and territory, scoring a converted and a non-converted try, but Currie scored with another two penalties and went on to win the match 19-15.

SPL Football

Hibs hopes of a top six finish are virtually gone after a 2-1 defeat to Inverness Caledonian Thistle at Easter Road. After an evenly fought first half, the Highlanders took the lead in the 48th minute when Ross Draper latched onto a long ball, and lobbed Ben Williams. Referee Craig Thompson denies Hibs a penalty when Ross Meekings handled the ball in the box, before Pat Fenlon's men equalised when Leigh Griffiths deflected a Gary Deegan shot, wrong footing the Caley keeper. The scores were level for only five minutes before Andrew Shinnie grabbed the winner with another deflected shot.

Other results mean that Kilmarnock could officially end Hibs' chances when they play St Mirren in midweek, but in any case, Hibs now have to beat Celtic at Parkhead next weekend and hope that several other results go in their favour.

At Pittodrie, two goals by Niall McGinn gave Aberdeen a 2-0 win over Hearts. The first came in 10 minutes when Gavin Rae's pass set Hayes free down the right and he ran towards goal before rolling the ball inside for McGinn to stroke into the

empty net. His second came in the 55th minute when he curled the ball into the top corner from a tight angle.

Hearts created a number of first-half opportunities, with John Sutton hitting the post, and the travelling fans had the bonus of seeing the return of long term injury victim Jamie Hamill who came on as a second half substitute for his first appearance since damaging a cruciate ligament almost a year ago.

Off the field, the club announced that shirt sponsors Wonga had extended their deal for another season.

East of Scotland Football

In midweek, in the Central Taxis Premier Division, Edinburgh City lost 5-1 away to Gretna 2008, after goalkeeper Andrew Stobie was sent off with defender Ross MacNamara taking over in goal, whilst in the first division, Craighroyston beat Berwick Rangers Reserves 3-2 at Shielfield, thanks to goals from Paul Lynch, Craig Dickson and Mark Hendrie.

There was an Edinburgh derby in the third round of the Kings Cup when Spartans played Leith Athletic at Ainslie Park. Leith took the lead in the 9th minute with striker Craig Hume scoring from 25 yards. They held the lead until half time, but Spartans equalised two minutes after the break through Donal Henretty.

Keith McLeod gave Spartans the lead 10 minutes later, before Jason Steven made it 2-2 in the 64th minute. With 15 minutes remaining, former Leith player Willie Bremner scored the winner for Spartans who will now meet either Gretna or Whitehill Welfare in the semi-final.

Donal Henretty won the Malt & Hops Man of the Match award.

Elsewhere Civil Service Strollers lost 4-0 away to Berwick Rangers Reserves.

In the First Division, Craigroyston travelled to the Borders and returned with all three points thanks to a 1-0 win over Kelso.

Women's Football

Hibs thrashed Spartans 7-1 at Albyn Park Broxburn in an all Edinburgh derby.

Hibs took an early lead when Kirsty Smith lobbed the keeper from 40 yards, but Spartans equalised through Marshall. The scores were level for only a minute before Smith gave Hibs a 2-1 lead, then Susan Fairlie added a third and then a fourth to give Hibs a 4-1 lead at the break.

Hibs continued to dominate in the second half and added Fairlie scored another two before Katie Turner completed the rout near the end.

Speedway

The Scotwaste Monarchs started slowly at Berwick, going ten down after seven heats, but the Armadale based team finished strongly to lose by just two points in the first leg of the Cock o' the North trophy.

The Monarchs' fans were encouraged by the display, particularly the form of Claus Vissing who made an impressive debut. Plus marks also go to the ever impressive Craig Cook, Theo Pijper and Jozsef Tabaka.

Boxing

☒ Meadowbank hosted a fantastic night of boxing at the 2013 ABS Scottish Championship finals on Saturday in front of a sizeable crowd. The results were as follows.

Bout 1 – Senior 52kg – Ryan McCutcheon (Clovenstone) beat Liban Elmi (Glasgow Phoenix) 13-8

Bout 2 – Senior 56kg – Joe Ham (Hayfield) beat Kevin Skey (Lochend) 18-11

Bout 3 – Senior 60kg – Charlie Flynn (Glasgow Phoenix) beat Robbie McKechnie (Greenock) RSC3

Bout 4 – Senior 64kg – Lewis Benson (Lochend) beat Jason Easton (Craigmillar) 16-14

Bout 5 – Senior 69kg – Connor Law (Glenrothes) beat Don Brown (Greenock) 17-5

Bout 6 – Senior 75kg – Aston Brown (Lochend) beat Kieran Smith (Springhill) 12-11

Bout 7 – Senior 81kg – Scott Forrest (Springhill) beat Jack Knorz (Byron) RSC3

Bout 8 – Senior 91kg – Stephen Lavelle (Hayfield) beat Michael Warner (Springhill) 9-8

Bout 9 – Senior 91+kg – Ross Henderson (Springhill) beat Daniel Gollan (Heriot Watt) 17-11

Ice Hockey

The Edinburgh Capitals' hopes of reaching the Rapid Solicitors Elite League Play Off Finals in Nottingham next weekend have ended after the team lost both legs against Belfast Giants.

On Saturday, the Capitals travelled to Belfast for the first leg of the Play Offs against the Giants, and took the lead through Peter Holecko, before Peacock equalised in the 30th minute. Daymen Rycroft gave the Northern Irish team in the 44th minute, and Dave Phillips added third near the end to take a 3-1 lead into the second leg.

Last night, despite a brave performance, the Caps lost 4-3 in the second leg at Murrayfield.

Basketball

City of Edinburgh Basketball Club, currently based at Portobello High School, may be forced to move to a new home after 20 years as the new downgraded facilities at the proposed new High School will not have enough space for spectator stands which is an important source of income for the club.

After the designs were released, club representatives asked that the new gym hall be extended to accommodate fans, but council bosses refused, saying the redesign would cost nearly £260,000 and was not affordable.

Boroughmuir Blaze lost their Scottish League play-off quarter-final second leg 77-70 to Glasgow University at the Craggs Sports Centre on Tuesday. Glasgow will meet Edinburgh Kings in the semi-final while Troon Tornadoes, will play Falkirk Fury.

Edinburgh University will host the 4 Nations Basketball Championships for men and women, from next Tuesday to Thursday at the Centre for Sport and Exercise in the Pleasance.

The Scottish men open against Wales on Tuesday (10am), play the Irish on Wednesday (12 noon) and wind up against England on Wednesday (1pm).

Scotland's women play Wales on Tuesday (12 noon), Northern Ireland on Wednesday (2pm) and England on Wednesday (3pm).

Scottish Universities men beat a Scottish League Select 74-69 on a friendly at the Peak Centre, Stirling.



Cycling

Edinburgh's Sir Chris Hoy was involved in a 6.1-magnitude earthquake which killed a 72 year-old woman and left at least 19 others injured in central Taiwan.

Staying 40 miles from the epicentre, Hoy said on Twitter: "In Taichung, just experienced my first proper earthquake! Building shaking and swaying, light fittings & pictures falling off the walls!" adding "Wow, it felt pretty scary here on the 15th floor of our hotel!"

His wife Sara also tweeted: "The earthquake has stopped but I'm still shaking."

Bowls

Bainfield's trio:- chartered accountant Kathryn O'Donnell, legal secretary Mandy O'Donnell and medical receptionist Anna Anderson, all from Edinburgh, narrowly lost in the final of the Triples event at the Scottish Championship at Fraserburgh

The trio beat Cumbernauld 22-17 in the semi-final on Saturday but lost the final 15-11 to Garioch the following day, despite having been 5-0 up in the early stages.

Gaelic Football

Leading timber processing firm, Glennon Brothers has announced a three year sponsorship of the brand new Edinburgh-based Gaelic football school league.

The company will provide financial backing to fund new kits and equipment to support the newly named 'Glennon Brothers School League.'

The announcement was made at the Irish Consulate in Edinburgh in an event attended by VIP guests including the Irish Minister of State for Small Business, John Perry and Consul General of Ireland to Scotland, Susan Conlon, as well as industry bodies Enterprise Ireland and Scottish Enterprise.

Mike Glennon, joint Managing Director at Glennon Brothers, said: -"We are delighted to have the opportunity to sponsor the Edinburgh school league for Gaelic Football. We all know that involvement in sport is enormously positive for young

people. Without the time, commitment, and patience of countless volunteers, and the team at Dunedin O'g, many young people would miss out on the wonderful opportunities that sport can provide, and we are delighted that we can support this venture and give back to the Scottish community which is so important to the success of our business."

"This sponsorship is a key part of our celebration of 100 years in business in 2013 and clearly marks the significance of Scotland to Glennon Brothers today. We wish the Edinburgh school league every success."

Peter Dillon, Dunedin Connollys Chairman said: "We are very grateful to Glennon Brothers for their kind and generous financial support of the Gaelic school league. It makes a huge difference for the families and children involved in the league, creating a solid foundation for us to build upon following the clubs inception last year.

"We are excited about spreading the word about Gaelic football to the Edinburgh youth community and are hopeful that the club will now go from strength to strength!"

Dunedin Connollys Gaelic football club was founded in 1988 taking the name Dunedin, which is the Gaelic translation of Edinburgh and Connolly's, named after James Connolly, famous Irish politician and patriot who was born in Edinburgh. In 1998, a ladies team was formed and in 2012 the school league was launched.

Dunedin Connollys Men's team has won nine Scottish Championship Titles and the Ladies team won the Ladies University Championship three years in a row.