

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



With many sports finished for the summer, all eyes are on Hampden where a board meeting of the SPL will decide Hearts' immediate future. The National Stadium will also be the scene of the Scottish Cup Final next Sunday between Hibs and Celtic, and the Edinburgh Reporter wishes both clubs well.

We also send out congratulations to Leigh Griffiths for adding the Scottish Football Writers Player of the Year award; the first Hibs player to do so since the great Pat Stanton. This award completes a unique treble of SPL Player of the Year and PFA Young Player of the Year. Well done to his team-mate Alex Harris who was voted the William Hill Scottish Cup Player of the round for his semi-final performance against Falkirk at Hampden.

Elsewhere congratulations to Craigroyston for winning the East of Scotland League Division One, Hutchison Vale and Tynecastle youngsters for trophy wins and also to the Edinburgh Monarchs for another double over Plymouth Devils.

Rugby by John Preece

Not so much in the way of action this week – well, none really – as two Scottish International players announced their retirement from the game, but for very different reasons.

Scotland's Joe Ansbro has been forced to retire from the game on the grounds of injury. The eleven times capped player fractured his C1 vertebra in a pre-season match and in spite of a long and intense period of rehabilitation, has had to accept the advice of Scotland's Head of Medical Services, James Robson and hang up his boots.

His full-team debut was in 2010 in the historic victory over South Africa after having made an impression playing for the 'A' side. In his, relatively short, International career he scored three tries for his country, the last one against being Samoa in the 2012 Southern Hemisphere Summer Tour.

Dumfriesshire born Ansbro will now take some time out to settle into the routine of 'normal' life and then decide on his future.

The Scotland Women's captain also announced her retirement, but on the grounds of 'my body's had enough'. Susie Brown, who has played for the National team for nine years and won 62 caps in the process, has finally decided to call time on her rugby career.

She started playing whilst still at school and has played at club level for Boroughmuir High School, Glasgow University, Hillhead-Jordanhill and, latterly, Richmond. Her International debut was against the USA at Murrayfield in 2004 and her final game was the eleven try defeat of Sweden last month, a game, in which, Brown scored the fourth and bonus-point try. One of her highlight games was beating France at a – very – misty Lasswade in 2010 (a match which, coincidentally, was the 'International' debut of The Reporter's rugby photographer and reporter, John Preece).

Brown has stated she would like to return to the game in some capacity in the future, but for now will dedicate some well-deserved time to her family and career.

Football

The main talking point amongst fans this week, is the fate of Hearts after parent company UBIG were listed on a Lithuanian government website of insolvent firms after reportedly declaring itself unable to meet its liabilities.

A team of Lithuanian lawyers have met SPL lawyers to try and

unravel the issues and a decision is expected following a board meeting at Hampden Park on Monday morning. Potential sanctions could include an 18 points deduction which would see the club relegated with immediate effect, or alternatively this could be delayed until next season and Hearts would start the campaign with minus 15 points.

On the other hand, the board could rule that Hearts have done nothing wrong and they can continue as normal.

Whatever the decision, it will have massive implications for Scottish football.

On the field, Hearts ended their league campaign with a 1-1 draw at Pittodrie. Ryan Stevenson gave Hearts the lead heading in a Smith corner, but a Jamie Hamill own goal with 13 minutes remaining ensured the points were shared.

Across the city, Hibs beat Dundee 1-0 thanks to a powerful David Wotherspoon header from a Lewis Stevenson cross, to claim seventh place. The result means that Hibs go into next weekend's Scottish Cup Final on the back of three straight wins, after beating Hearts in the Edinburgh derby, then beating Kilmarnock 3-1 at Rugby Park on Wednesday night thanks to goals from Scott Robertson and Eoin Doyle (2).

The final SPL table sees Hibs on 51 points in seventh with Hearts on 44 points in tenth.

After the game, the Hibs players completed a 'lap of honour' to say thank you to the fans for their support throughout the season.

On Sunday, Leigh Griffiths was named the Football writers Player of the Year and Alex Harris won the William Hill Scottish Cup Player of the Round for his performance against Falkirk in the semi-final.

East of Scotland Football

Whitehill Welfare clinched the Central Taxis Premier Division title with a 1-0 victory against Gretna 2008 on Wednesday night as the club's nearest challengers, Spartans, were beaten 2-0 away from home by Stirling University.

Craigroyston won the Central Taxis First Division and promotion after beating Leith Athletic 4-2 in front of a large crowd at Spartans' Ainslie Park.

Craigroyston took the lead midway through the first half from a Wilson volley before Leith equalised through Lewis Tracey. John Dunn restored Craigroyston's lead and Anderson made it 3-1 but Hume pulled one back before Errol Douglas sealed the win in stoppage time.

Saturday ended with Tynecastle being relegated after a 2-1 home defeat by Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale. Elsewhere Edinburgh City beat Civil Service Strollers 2-0 in Muirhouse, and Preston Athletic beat Heriot Watt 6-0, and Spartans lost 2-0 at home to Edinburgh University.

In the First Division, newly crowned champions Craigroyston beat Berwick Rangers Reserves 3-1 whilst Leith Athletic hammered Eyemouth 5-0.

At least there was some good news for Spartans as their under-19s beat Edinburgh City 2-1 after extra time at Tynecastle on Friday night. City took the lead before Matthew Underhill equalised with ten minutes left. In extra time a Calum Donnelly free kick was deflected into his own net by a City defender to secure the trophy.

Women's Football

Glasgow City retained top spot in the league with an impressive 4-0 won over Hibs at Albyn Park Broxburn, thanks to goals from Sue Lappin, Leanne Ross, Sarah Crilly and Leanne Chrichton.

Elsewhere Spartans came from 2-0 down to win 3-2 away to Aberdeen.

Schoolboy Football

Congratulations go to Hutchison Vale 15s who came from behind to beat Dundee United 3-2 and win the Scottish Youth Challenge Cup at the Excelsior Stadium in Airdrie.

Dundee United took the lead in the 41st minute after a spectacular goal by Gibb, but Hutchie equalised right away through Gabriele Auriemma.

Three minutes into the second half Vale took the lead through Feachen-Hamilton, then Fraser Paton added a third midway through the second half.

Gibb pulled one back for the Tayside team but Hutchie held on to win the trophy.

Hutchison Vale: Byron Gibb, Cameron Milne, Fraser Paton, Sam Birch, Cameron Begbie, Shaun O'Donnell, Cal Sheridan, Ryan Fox, Ethan Feachen-Hamilton, Regan Hendry, Gabriele Auriemma, Cameron Fraser, Innes Goodall, Cameron McAlpine, Lewis Swaney, Arran Singh.

Congratulations also to Tynecastle 16s who won their fourth consecutive Scottish Cup by beating Clydebank United 4-0, at Airdrie United's Excelsior Stadium.

Tynecastle took the lead when Greg Kerr played a pass into Kyle Mitchell who chipped the ball over Collinson from 16 yards.

Jason Kerr added a second with 15 minutes remaining before Matthew Quinn sealed the victory with a back post header from a Craig Russell cross, then substitute Euan Graham completed the rout.

Tynecastle FC: Billy Taylor, David Wright, Calum Cowan,

Matthew Quinn, Euan Graham, Craig Russell, Jaimie Purves, Jason Kerr, Greg Kerr, Kyle Mitchell, Mark Shiells, Ciaron Small, Ryan Currie, Liam Thomson, David Henderson, Joseph Walker.

Speedway

Scotwaste Monarchs beat Plymouth Devils 56-36 despite a scare in the early stages when they took the lead in heat 4 and were still level after six races.

In heat 7 however, Mitchell Davey, in his first match for the Monarchs, who leapt from the tapes with Claus Vissing backing up for the 5-1.

Craig Cook and Theo Pijper both finished unbeaten from 5 rides, and Jozef Tabaka was also in top form despite suffering from a puncture in heat 4.

The following night, the Monarchs travelled south to Plymouth and returned with a well-deserved 51-42 victory at a ground, where they had not previously managed to take a single point.

The Monarchs had ten race winners and only five lasts, and a special mention goes to Max Fricke, who bounced right back in spite of a fall in the first running of heat 3, took a paid win there and added a match-winning three points with his first race win in heat 14.

Theo Pijper and Claus Vissing were both in top form and Mitchell Davey took a good third in heat 2.

Cricket

Scotland took on Pakistan at the Grange in a one day international on Thursday. The visitors won the toss and choose to bat, and after making 231-7, cantered to victory by bowling Scotland out for just 135.

The slow pitch at The Grange seemed to catch out Pakistan

early on, with Nasir Jamshed (20) first to go while Mohammad Hafeez (18) followed. Imran Farhat was then bowled by Haq's fellow spinner Matt Machan on 49, just missing a half-century.

Haq then bowled out Asad Shafiq (seven) before claiming Umar Amin (three) while Akmal made just 12 before being trapped lbw by Neil Carter.

A 51-run seventh-wicket partnership by skipper Misbah-ul-Haq and Ajmal steadied the visitors nerves and Misbah eventually finished 78 not out.

The match had been Kyle Coetzer's first as Scotland skipper, and he led by example with a top score of 32.

The second one day international on Sunday was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.