

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



This week, The Edinburgh Reporter sends our congratulations to Spartans for winning their first trophy in two years and also Hibs for retaining the East of Scotland Shield against Hearts at Tynecastle.

Commiserations go to Spartans Women who lost out to a strong Glasgow City side in the final of the Scottish Premier League Cup.

Rugby by John Preece

It was announced this week that Scotland's new head coach will be Vern Cotter. The New Zealander is currently the head coach at French Top 14 club, Clermont Auvergne. Cotter was signed up several months ago, but out of respect to Clermont, the capture of one of the World's top coaches was not announced until after the season's end. However, Cotter is still contracted to Clermont for the 2013-14 season and will not join formally the Scotland set-up until the end of the coming season. As a result, Scott Johnson will continue in the role as interim head coach before he takes on the role of Director of Rugby. Not ideal, but not a bad sub.

It's the Women's turn this weekend to fight to retain their FIRA (the International Federation of Amateur Rugby. It's French!) Grand Prix status in their Sevens Tour. They have to finish in the top ten of both of the upcoming tournaments – Brive, then Marbella two weeks later – to retain their place and their 2014 ranking, and World Cup qualification, will depend on their final placings.

Edinburgh have lined up two English Premiership teams for

their pre-season warm-up matches at the end of August. For the really keen, the first match is against Northampton Saints at Franklin Gardens on the 23rd August. Last season, the Saints travelled up to Murrayfield (photo) and hammered Edinburgh 54-3, so it would be reasonable to expect a similar scoreline for them at home. Here's hoping Edinburgh can get off to a better start this time around.

The second match is against Newcastle Falcons a week later at 'a venue to be confirmed', according to Edinburgh Rugby. This match may well be played at one of the Borders' clubs, with Murrayfield being held 'in reserve' if nothing comes of the plan. Newcastle have recently been on a recruiting drive in anticipation of promotion to the Premiership (successfully anticipated) and a number of former Edinburgh and Scotland players will be returning home, so to speak.

Looming large on the horizon is the draw for the 2013-14 Heineken Cup. Edinburgh will enter the draw in tier three. The tier for each team is determined by maths too probably complicated to go into, but is based on performance over the last four years in the Heineken Cup and Amlin Challenge Cup. The draw will take place on the 5th June at 2:30pm and will be streamed live on www.ercrugby.com for the terminally dedicated. Edinburgh went through to the semi-finals two seasons ago, but failed to win a match last year. Hopefully, the new coaching team and new players will be able to inspire a better performance in this year's tournament.

International Football

Six capital youngsters, Bradley Donaldson, Ross Caldwell, Danny Handling and Alex Harris from Hibs and Jordan McGhee and David Smith from Hearts have been selected for the Scotland Under-20 squad for the SDO Den Haag youth tournament.

The Scots started the tournament in style with two goals from Handling in the first three minutes against Brazilian club

side Cruzeiro at the Kyocera Stadium and eventually ran out 3-1 winners.

The youngsters then played two games on Saturday, losing 1-0 to FK Senika before drawing 1-1 with Club Brugge to set up a semi-final with Mexico.

Edinburgh Football

Hibs amazing record in the East of Scotland Shield continued on Friday night at Tynecastle as the Easter Road Under 17s convincingly beat city rivals Hearts 3-0 to win the old trophy for the ninth consecutive season.

A sizeable crowd saw Hibs take the lead on the half hour mark thanks to a well taken volley from striker Lewis Allan. Jordan Sinclair added a second with a 25 yard free kick before substitute Dominic Docherty sealed victory with a header.

The following day, Hibs fans beat Hearts fans 3-0 in a charity match at Tynecastle.

Off the field, Hearts confirmed that out-of-contract Lithuanian international Arvydas Novikovas will leave the club in the summer. The 22 year-old, who has been capped 12 times, scored three goals in 37 appearances last year, and joins Darren Barr, Danny Grainger, Gordon Smith, Mehdi Taouil, Fraser Mullen and Denis Prychynenko on the list of players who will be seeking pastures new as manager Gary Locke continues his rebuilding programme.

Former Liverpool player Danny Wilson has signed a three year deal with the Gorgie club, and former Rangers star Kris Boyd has confirmed that he has spoken to Locke about the possibility of a contract. Speculation regarding Blackburn Rovers striker David Goodwillie joining Hearts on loan continues.

The club hopes to hear whether Andy Webster will accept a new

deal after his contract ran out on Friday.

Earlier in the week, the club unveiled the new home strip for next season which will be made by Adidas. The maroon top is complimented by white bands on the sleeves and the shorts and socks will be all maroon.

Across the city, Hibs confirmed that Welsh international Owain Tudor-Jones has joined the club on a two year deal from Inverness Caledonian Thistle, and on-loan full back Ryan McGivern has accepted a two year contract after being freed by Manchester City.

The pair will join their team-mates when pre-season training resumes on 17 June, only 22 days after the Scottish Cup Final. The club will find out who their European opponents will be when the draw is made on 24 June.

Hibs have announced a four year deal with sportswear brand Nike as the clubs Official Technical Partner.

East of Scotland Football

Congratulations to Spartans who secured their first silverware in two years after beating Berwick Rangers Reserves at St Marks Park on Saturday in the final of the Kings Cup.

Rangers took an early lead when Kenny O'Brien scored from the edge of the box, and although the linesman raised his flag, he was over-ruled by the referee and the goal stood.

Spartans equalised in the 35th minute thanks to an Ally MacKinnon header from a Kevin Motion cross, then three minutes later Rangers' Grant McNicol was sent off for a foul on Andy Martin.

The Ainslie Park side took the lead just after the break when once again MacKinnon got onto the end of a Motion cross and headed the ball home from two yards.

With 13 minutes remaining, Jack Beesley found Keith Macleod unmarked on the penalty spot and the striker took a touch before spinning round and firing the ball into the corner of the net.

Berwick had the chance to get back into the game when they were awarded a late penalty, but Josh Morris's powerful effort struck the post and ended up in the arms of keeper Iain McTurk, who was playing his last game for the club before heading to America to play college soccer.

Women's Football

Commiseration to Spartans Women who lost in the final of the Scottish Premier League Cup to on-form Glasgow City on Wednesday night at Recreation Park Alloa.

A hat-trick from Ruesha Littlejohn combined with a fine header from Suzanne Lappin and a penalty from City captain Leanne Ross secured the trophy and maintained the Glasgow sides 100% record this season.

The Reporter sends out congratulations to Hibs' players to Claire Emslie, Caroline Weir and Siobhan Hunter who all won their first caps in Scotland's 3-2 win over Iceland.

Boxing

Lochend boxers Aston Brown (75kg) and Josh Taylor (64kg) travelled to Minsk with Team Scotland to participate in the AIBA Elite Senior European Championship, arguably one of the toughest boxing tournaments in the world.



Hockey by John Preece

Not so much a round-up as a heads-up. Scotland Men's and Women's teams will be in action at Peffermill in Edinburgh on a variety of dates starting on 10 June 2013. Wales, Ireland,

South Africa and England 'B' (Photo Scotland v England 'B') are all coming up to play in some sort of tournament/friendlies/something-not-particularly-well-announced-by-Scottish-Hockey. Fixture details can be sought out [on their website here](#) and it is likely that entry will be free, but, again, that has not yet been announced by the SHU. For a fast, exciting, end-to-end sport, it is hard to beat International standard hockey. Only 35 minutes each way, play barely stops moving, and, with the ball travelling at up to, and occasionally over, 100mph, rolling substitutes are essential.

Speedway

The Scotwaste Monarchs lost 5-4 to eventual winners Somerset Rebels in the semi-finals of the Premier Pairs on Friday night in Somerset. This was the first time the Monarchs had reached the semi-final stage since 2002.

The Armadale based team are at home to Redcar Bears on Friday 7 June then return to Somerset the following Tuesday.