

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Round-up



Hockey

by John Preece

Scotland's Women retained their place at the top table of European Hockey over the weekend with a 3-1 win over relegation 'rivals' Ireland (library photo from Peffermill). Although only needing a draw, the Scots went out to win, but it was Ireland who were first on the scoreboard. After two goal stopping saves, it was third time lucky for the Irish who found the net after 21 minutes. Two Scottish goals, one from a penalty stroke and one from a penalty corner gave Scotland the half time lead. Despite a missed penalty stroke early in the second half, the Scots scored their third goal from another corner to take the match and ensure they're on the train/boat/plane/whatever to London for the next Championships in two year's time.

The club scene pushes back with a programme of men's 2nd and 3rd division games next weekend, before the season fully gets underway the weekend after that.

Rugby

by Jonny Davis

In recent weeks Edinburgh Rugby have unveiled a new sponsor, new coach and new kit, not to mention a whole host of new players joining the club for the coming season.

This week, the busy summer of recruitment at Murrayfield

continued as the Gunners added former Stormers and Biarritz prop, Wicus Blaauw to their increasing line of new faces.

The 27-year-old boasts an impressive CV, having accrued years of experience of top-flight competition in both the northern and southern hemisphere, and is a player that new head coach Alan Solomons, knows a great deal about.

“I’ve seen a lot of Wicus” said Solomons.

“He’s played a lot of games at a high level, for both the Western Province and the Stormers, in South Africa’s premier provincial and Super Rugby sides, as well in the French Top 14 and Heineken Cup.

“He’s a very strong loosehead prop and is very good at his core roles, especially scrummaging. I believe he will be an asset to Edinburgh Rugby.”

Upon signing with the capital-city club, Blaauw, who is due to meet up with the team next month, said, “This is a great opportunity for me to immerse myself in the rugby culture in Edinburgh and become part of the family at the club.

“I love scrummaging, I love running with the ball, and I love tackling. These are things you have to do well and are things I’m looking forward to doing for Edinburgh.”

Heading in the other direction, it was announced this week that another prop forward, John Yapp, is leaving Edinburgh Rugby.

Yapp, who made 23 appearances for the club last season has agreed to join London Irish for a season-long loan.

Whilst the start of the season is still a few weeks away, Edinburgh took to the field on Friday night at Franklins Gardens, in their pre-season friendly match against Northampton Saints.

Despite recording a 24-6 defeat against the Aviva Premiership runners-up, coach Solomons believes there was much cause for optimism in the sides' first outing since his arrival.

In truth it was a much closer game than the score-line suggests. At half-time Edinburgh led 0-3 and up until 65 minutes were within a point of the Saints.

Reflecting on the tie, Solomons said, "I'm very pleased with the performance. The score doesn't matter at all.

"We wanted to get everybody on the pitch, so we made some changes and obviously that disrupts your rhythm. I thought we played really well for the first 60 to 65 minutes.

"I think we showed a lot of physicality and I think we had a little bit of an edge in large parts of the game."

Next week Edinburgh Rugby will continue their preseason action against Newcastle Falcons at Mansfield Park, Friday (7.45pm).

by John Preece

On the club front, Edinburgh Accies registered the only local win in the RBS Premiership with a narrow 21-20 win over Glasgow Hawks. Currie suffered a heavy defeat away at Gala, going down 31-14, a similar scoreline to that suffered by Heriots who lost 30-14 at Melrose.

In the National League, the Edinburgh sides fared a lot better. In addition to Watsonians 44-22 win over Peebles at Myreside, across the road at Meggetland, Boroughmuir won 40-19 (35-0 at half time) against Hillhead/Jordanhill. While this was all going on, Stewart's-Melville stuck 44 unanswered points away against GHA in Glasgow to make it a clean sweep for the Edinburgh teams.

Football

In football news Hibs won 2-1 away at Rugby Park securing 3 points in the Scottish Premiership. Next Saturday 31 August the Hibeers will play at home to Ross County. Kick off at 3:00pm.

Gerry Baker, a former star of the Easter Road, team died over the weekend and John Hislop has written a tribute to him [here.](#)

Hearts won at home to Aberdeen on Saturday, and you can read the full match report which Mike Smith has penned for The Edinburgh Reporter [here.](#)

Spartans FC won 3-1 against Edinburgh City, although the women's team were not so successful and lost 8-1 to Glasgow City.

Cricket

Despite the 447 runs scored at The Oval, and the fact that England lifted the Ashes urn with a record of 3-0 over the visitors, there was an amount of discontent among cricket fans while the fireworks were going off. The game ended in a draw due to bad light confirming England's win.

Holy Cross Cricket Club went off to St Boswells for what they described as 'an amiable game' which they won and have retained their slot in Division 1.

Golf



(L-R) Gavin Cook and Kevin Wood (a) of Prestonfield Golf Club, winners of The Lombard Trophy Regional

Qualifier at Ladybank Golf Club on July 10th, 2013 in Ladybank, Scotland. (Photo by Mark Runnacles/Getty Images)

Prestonfield Golf Club amateur Kevin Wood admits he is readying himself to take on the Ryder Cup course at Gleneagles.

The Edinburgh electrician knows sparks will fly when he steps up to the tee for the final of The Lombard Trophy.

Wood, 30, will partner Prestonfield PGA Professional Gavin Cook for the £43,600 showpiece event which will be held over the PGA Centenary course at the venue for next year's Ryder Cup on September 3-4.

But Wood, who plays off a handicap of seven, knows the enormity of the task has yet to sink in.

He admitted: "It'll only hit me when my name is called at the start, but from then on it'll be down to business.

"I am excited about the prospect though, once I've hit that first ball then I just have to put it out of my mind and try to help Gavin to win.

"It's a case of playing my normal game and not making a fool of myself. But it's going to be a tremendous experience to play the holes that the world's best players will take on next year in the Ryder Cup."

Wood is back into the swing of it after taking time out from golf a few years back.

He said: "I played as a junior then got back into it again about five years ago. I've been playing reasonably well."

Cook admits he and Wood will not have far to travel to the venue, but he is not convinced it will give them an advantage over the competition.

He smiled: "Of all the clubs taking part, we're the closest to Gleneagles, it's only about 35 minutes away.

"I've played there before, but there've been plenty of changes for the Ryder Cup, so I'm not sure we'll have an advantage."

But Cook says he will use plenty of reverse psychology to make sure he and Wood play well as a team.

He added: "I don't like to put pressure on the amateur players, if we're doing well then I won't let on, that's when the whole thing can collapse.

"It's part of the professional's job to make sure his partner doesn't get too nervous."

This is the first of a three-year sponsorship by Lombard, the UK's leading asset finance provider.

Ian Isaac, Lombard's interim managing director, paid tribute to all 32 finalists.

"Over the past couple of months we have welcomed golfers from more than 700 clubs throughout the UK who have participated in this prestigious event and we would like to congratulate the 16 qualifying teams who have reached the grand final at Gleneagles."

Petanque

Looking for a new sport? The Inverleith Petanque Club play three or four times a week in the south east corner of Inverleith Park. This is what they say [on their website:-](#)

We meet every Tuesday and Thursday night from April until October , Wednesday afternoons and there is always an organised competition of some sort on Sunday afternoons more or less all year round.