

Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



Our congratulations go to Edinburgh's new boxing champion Stephen Simmons who won the WBC International Silver title against German, David Graf in Glasgow on Saturday night in Glasgow, the Hibs Fit Fans and Loanhead over 50s walking football team who won all four games at the Aberdeen Walking 5-a-side Football Festival last weekend, and North Berwick's Catriona Matthew who won the Aberdeen Asset Management Ladies' Scottish Open at Archerfield Links

Elsewhere we check out the new Lowland League and the Central Taxis' East of Scotland League, the RBS Leagues as well as the Edinburgh Capitals and Edinburgh Scotwaste Monarchs.

Rugby by Jonny Davis

Edinburgh Rugby got their RaboDirect PRO12 campaign under way this weekend with a tough 34-23 defeat to Munster at Mungrave Park. Home side, Munster wasted no time in getting on the score sheet in the season opener. After some expansive, attacking play, combined with some flustered and at times sloppy Edinburgh defence, the Irish side found themselves three tries to the good and 22-6 up at half time.

During the break fears of a whitewash began to creep into the hearts of the traveling Edinburgh fans, though these were soon quelled. Scotland International Nick De Luca gave the Black and Red Army something to cheer about early in the second half, scoring a scintillating try from 25 metres, evading 3 tacklers before touching down under the posts.

Despite conceding a further two tries, the Gunners were a much different outfit in the second half, and made it much more

difficult for Munster to close the game out.

They added intensity to their defence and attack, and for long phases looked composed yet threatening.

Winger Lee Jones gave Edinburgh fans more grounds for encouragement, as he crossed with a fine finish towards the end of the match, but even with Harry Leonard's successful touchline conversion, the capital side fell just shy of earning a losing bonus point.

Speaking after the game, head coach Alan Solomons pulled positives from the defeat. "I think that we showed tremendous character in the second half. The problem we had in the first-half, which put us on the back foot, is that we allowed them to generate momentum.

"That made it very difficult for us to get width on our defence and that is something we're going to work very, very hard on."

Bearing in mind that Edinburgh's new defensive coach Omar Mouneimne has only been with the club for a week, and with many key players still to return from injury, Solomons encouragingly stressed, "I have absolutely no doubt that, given time; we will sort out that problem.

"Cutting down our errors, especially on restarts, and stopping momentum will make an enormous difference, however the biggest thing to take away from the game is the character they have shown."

Rugby by John Preece

Round three of the RBS leagues saw the teams settling in to their new coaches, players and opponents with one close, and several not close at all, results to report.

First up is the RBS Premiership where Currie, Edinburgh Accies and Heriots reside. And it was Heriots who took the only local

win with an 18-13 win at Stirling County. Currie and Accies, however, both lost. Accies lost out to Hawick 34-22 at home, while struggling Currie suffered their third defeat of the early season, this time 29-0 away at Ayr.

This leaves Accies and Heriots in third and fourth places respectively, both with two wins from three matches, and Currie still at the foot of the table with only one bonus point from their three matches.

In the RBS National League, Watsonians continued to hold sway with their third straight, emphatic win against Borders clubs with a 74-5 win against Biggar (photo). Across the road – nearly – Boroughmuir also notched up their third win of the season with a 37-17 victory over Dundee. In spite of a bright start to the season, however, Stewarts-Melville lost at home to mid-table rivals, Peebles 32-0 (27-0 at half time!).

Unsurprisingly, Watsonians head the table with a complete set of win and bonus points from their three matches, closely followed by Boroughmuir in third. Stew-Mel hold sixth place with one win and one each of try and 'within seven points' loss bonus points.

Rugby photograph at www.photoboxgallery.com

International Football

Gordon Strachan's Scotland lost 2-0 to a strong Belgium side at Hampden on Friday night in the World Cup 2014 qualifying campaign.

Steven Defour and Kevin Mirallas were on target as the visitors moved one step closer to a place at next summer's finals in Brazil.

The result leaves the Scots at the bottom of the group after Macedonia, Scotland's opponents on Tuesday night, picked up all three points against Wales.

Former Hibs' players Leigh Griffiths, Scott Brown and Steven Whittaker started the game, while former Hearts' defender Lee Wallace was an unused substitute.

Scotland Under 21s went down to a 4-0 European qualifying defeat by the Netherlands. The side contained Hearts stars Jason Holt and Jordan McGhee who became the fourth youngest player ever to represent Scotland at this level, started the match, while Callum Paterson was a second-half substitute.

Elsewhere, injury prevented Hibs' full-back Ryan McGivern facing Cristiano Ronaldo as Portugal beat Northern Ireland 4-2, but former Hearts' favourite Ryan McGowan featured for Australia in their 6-0 defeat to Brazil.

Hearts

Some good news for Hearts as the red card issued to Jamie Hamill for handball against Inverness Caledonian Thistle last Saturday was quashed leaving him free to play against Celtic next week at Tynecastle.

The Scottish Football Association's judicial panel overturned the dismissal by referee John Beaton who ordered Hamill off nine minutes from the end of Hearts' 2-0 defeat insisting he had deliberately used a hand to block a shot at goal from Billy McKay, but television footage clearly showed the ball hitting the Hamill on the head.



Meanwhile the Foundation of Hearts have revealed that 98% of direct debit pledges by fans so far have been successful.

FoH chairman Ian Murray MP said: "We extend a huge thanks to supporters. The fact that the first month of direct debits has gone so well, is wonderful news, as it gives us a great platform to push on. There are, of course, many more months and years of direct debits, but to have finally got the

process underway is terrific.

“To have a 98% success rate on direct debits is virtually unheard of, and it is again a sign of the unwavering loyalty of the Hearts support.”

The Foundation has also announced it is launching a “SuperDraw” for supporters who have successfully had a direct debit drawn down, to win a series of prizes.

Hearts face Celtic at Tynecastle next Saturday; Kick off 12.30pm.

Hibs

New signings Abdellah Zoubir and Paul Heffernan scored in a 3-1 win over a Rangers team in a closed door game at the clubs Training Centre.

Chairman Rod Petrie will meet supporters group ‘Let’s Work Together’ for a question and answer session on Wednesday.

The East Terrace is almost a sell out with less than 50 stones remaining however that option to buy a 200×200 replica stone is now unavailable.

Hibs travel to Perth to play St Johnstone next Saturday; Kick off 3.00pm.

Lowland League

There were excellent results for both Edinburgh clubs on Saturday.

Spartans took the lead against Whitehill Welfare when Mark Whately converted a John Grant cross into the net from six yards. Ten minutes into the second half, Spartans doubled their lead when Grant sent in another perfectly weighted cross for Alan Brown to beat former team-mate Ryan McGurk at his right hand post, before celebrating with a Roger Milla style

dance at the corner flag to the delight of the sizeable home support.

After the game a delighted Spartans Manager Dougie Samuel told the club website: "It was a big win for us and I don't think anyone could deny us our victory today. It took a great performance and a lot of application because Whitehill are a top side. Let's not forget that they are the holders of the two biggest trophies from last year and it was great for us to come out and win the first of an incredible five games we face against them this season."

Man of the Match Alan Brown was naturally delighted with the win. "It was always going to be a difficult game however at home we fancied our chances. Whitehill came at us with the long channel football however it was our style of passing football, one of the main reasons why I joined the club that won it for us on the day."

Elsewhere Edinburgh City beat league leaders Vale of Leithen 2-1 thanks to goals from McFarland and Stenhouse. Mearns scored a late consolation goal for Vale.

Spartans sit third with 13 points from six games, whilst Edinburgh City remain ninth with seven points from six games.

Central Taxi's East of Scotland League

In the Premier division, Spartans lost 3-1 to Stirling University at Forthbank Stadium, whilst Civil Service Strollers beat Coldstream 2-0 at Home Park.

Leith Athletic beat Tynecastle 2-1 at Telford College, and Edinburgh University beat Heriot Watt 2-1 at Peffermill.

In the Alex Jack Cup, Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale beat Craigroyston 3-2 after extra time at St Marks Park.

Hibs kept their 100% record intact and remain top of the first division with a 1-0 win over Berwick Rangers Reserves at

Shielfield Park thanks to a late goal from Max Todd.

Women's Football

Hibs Ladies beat Glasgow Girls 10-0 at Albyn Park Broxburn to reach the semi-final of the Scottish Cup, thanks to goals from Sarah Laverty (3), Susan Fairlie (2), Katey Turner (2), Joelle Murray, Rachael Walkinshaw and Lizzie Arnot.

Elsewhere Glasgow City proved to be too tough for Spartans, winning 8-0 at Ainslie Park thanks to goals from Jess Fishlock (3), Suzanne Mulvey (3) Leanne Ross and Jules Nelson.

Walking Football

Well done to the Hibs Fit Fans and Loanhead over 50s walking football group for a fantastic performance at the Aberdeen Walking 5-a-side Football Festival last weekend.



The tournament was organised by AFC In the Community, and the Lothian team won all four games against Torry 1 and 2, Aberdeen FFiT and Aberdeen veterans.

They then took on Aberdeen coaches in a six-a-side match but went down 3-2.

The team consisted of Glenn Milne(Goalkeeper); Alistair McGregor; Andrew Wayth; Eric Platten; 'Drew Sinclair and Peter Collins.

Loanhead's Andrew Wayth was the Tournament Top scorer, whilst the oldest player was 82 year old Peter Collins.

Boxing

There was plenty of interest for east coast boxing fans on the Ricky Burns undercard on Saturday night at the SECC in Glasgow.

Cruiserweight Stephen Simmons won the vacant WBC International Silver title against German, David Graf on points after a gruelling encounter.

The Edinburgh fighter dropped his opponent in the fourth round from a right to the side of the head then had him in trouble several times throughout the match, before winning a unanimous decision from the three judges 99-91 98-92 97-92.

Simmons, who won a bronze medal as an amateur at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, only made the switch to the pro circuit in January 2011 has now gone nine fight undefeated.

South Queensferry's light welterweight Paul Appleby made a comeback to the ring after taking a break from the sport in June last year, and four months of intense training paid off as the 26-year-old former super featherweight British champion beat Englishman Lee Connelly on points over six rounds.

Ice Hockey

The Capitals started the season with a 5-0 defeat away to Belfast Giants on Saturday night, then returned to Murrayfield on Sunday where they lost 2-1 to Fife Flyers.

Curtis Leinweber opened the scoring for the Capitals before Chaumont equalised. Stewart grabbed the winner in the 17th minute.

Meanwhile Breken Inns have agreed to become the headline sponsor of the Capitals. The company have been involved with the Capitals for the past few years but this year have decided to increase their support, and the Capitals shirts will have their logo as the headline sponsor.

Scott Neil told the Caps' website "Breken Inns have been keen supporters of the Edinburgh Capitals but I am really pleased that they have decided to become headline sponsors this season. For me it shows that they have faith in where we have

been taking the team and they now want to help us take things one step further.”

Speedway

Friday's match against Ipswich was postponed due to the weather conditions and will be restaged on Tuesday with a 7:30 start.

With the cut-off date a week on Sunday, and Derek Sneddon's Testimonial next Friday, Ipswich accepted the invitation to return on Tuesday, a very unusual day for Monarchs to stage a meeting.

This means that the Monarchs will have a very busy schedule, with the Scottish Cup first leg at Glasgow on Sunday, Workington away on Monday, Ipswich at Armadale on Tuesday, away at Ipswich on Thursday and Derek's meeting on Friday 13th.

Golf

North Berwick's Catriona Matthew won the Aberdeen Asset Management Ladies' Scottish Open at Archerfield Links, with a two-shot success over England's Hannah Burke after closing with a 70 for an eight-under-par aggregate of 208.