

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



Rugby by John Preece

Edinburgh were on a 'free' weekend this week which gave them a chance to recover from the hammering they received against Munster in the Heineken Cup last weekend. Lack of play at Murrayfield for a few weeks – next match is Scotland v England on the 8th February – is also giving the pitch a chance to recover. There was some good news, however, as the citing panel in Dublin decided that Cornel du Preez' yellow against Munster for 'striking' Paul O'Connell was sufficient punishment and no further action was to be taken.

The latest round of the HSBC World Sevens Series took place in Las Vegas with Scotland drawn in a group with Fiji, New Zealand and Australia. With the sevens game not going too well at the moment for the Scots, it looked like another round of heavy defeats was on the cards. And with a 24-0 whitewash to Fiji and a 26-5 win for New Zealand, things were not looking too good for the game against the Wallabies. Which proved to be the case as the Australian seven put 26 points on the board to Scotland's 7, thus 'qualifying' the Scots for the Bowl competition.

Scotland went on to beat Portugal in the Bowl quarter-final 31-7 to go through to a semi-final match-up with Kenya, which they lost 21-7. (Photo – Library, Lee Jones against Kenya at Murrayfield).

With the leagues starting up this weekend, we were off to Stewarts-Melville to watch, report on and photograph – not necessarily in that order – on the RBS National League match against Hillhead/Jordanhill. Unfortunately, in between leaving

for the match and arriving at Inverleith, the club and Scottish Rugby had caught up with events and posted the match as 'Off'! Oh, how we laughed.... The matches at Boroughmuir and Watsonians were also off due to waterlogged pitches.

In the Premiership, Currie should have been playing Aberdeen Grammar – who are up against Edinburgh Accies in the RBS Cup Quarter-finals – at home and Accies against Heriots, but both matches were off, again presumably due to unplayable pitches.

Speaking of the RBS Cup, the four quarter-finals came out of the hat as follows –

Edinburgh Accies v Aberdeen Grammar. K/O 14:30 (hopefully, the one we'll be at)

Ayr v Glasgow Hawks. K/O 14:30

Melrose v Heriots. K/O 14:30

Gala v Stirling County. K/O 15:00

Weather permitting (!), the matches are scheduled to be played on the 15th February.

One result which slipped under the radar was Heriots win in the Edinburgh Regional Cup. They beat fellow Premiership side 40-7 (or 30-7 if the SRU site is correct!) at Balerno a couple of weeks ago to claim the silverware.

Football

There was mixed fortunes for the Edinburgh clubs this weekend. On Saturday Hearts finally moved onto a positive points total with a fine 2-1 win over Ross County in Dingwall. Callum Paterson gave Hearts the lead after 37 minutes but on loan Blackburn Rovers defender Yann Songo'o equalised just before the break. Scott Robinson grabbed the winner with 10 minutes remaining.

The following day, Hibs lost 4-0 to champions Celtic in a controversial game at Easter Road where the main talking point was the performance of referee Craig Thomson which led to calls on twitter for him to be banned from taking charge of future Hibs' games.

Kris Commons opened the scoring in the 7th minute then Thomson waved away two penalty appeals before awarding a dubious free kick which led to Celtic's second goal from Virgil van Dijk. Teemu Pukki added a third before Commons wrapped things up in the last minute from the penalty spot.

Afterwards an angry Terry Butcher described the free kick decision as 'bizarre' but refused to comment on the referee's overall performance as to do so would result in him getting into trouble with the SFA.

Image Printer's Cup

Spartans reached the semi-finals of the Image Printers Cup with a 4-0 win against Vale of Leithen at Ainslie Park in Saturday.

Spartans took the lead in the 23rd minute when Keith McLeod scored his 22nd goal of the season to continue his phenomenal run.

The Ainslie Park outfit added a second two minutes later when John Grant scored an own goal and went in at the break two goals up.

Kevin Motion added a third with the aid of a deflection before McLeod wrapped things up with a half-volley to score his 267th Spartans career.

McLeod left the field in the 68th minute to a standing ovation from the Spartan Army.

Malt and Hops Man of the Match: Jack Beesley.

Elsewhere

Central Taxis East of Scotland League

Lothian Thistle HV 5-0 Peebles Rovers

Gala Fairydean Rovers 5-1 Hawick Royal Albert

All other games were postponed.

Athletics

A thrilling Sainsbury's Glasgow International Match, which included 13 wins for British Athletes, proved the perfect curtain raiser to the indoor season at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow. In the unique match where GB & NI took on USA, a Commonwealth Select team and, for the first time ever, a Scottish Select team there were five Scottish wins for the home crowd to cheer. Most notable being that of middle distance star Laura Muir (coach: Andy Young) whose 800m win saw her awarded the Sainsbury's Performance of the day.

However one of the afternoon's most memorable moments came when 2012 European 800m Champion Lynsey Sharp, finally received her gold medal from her father and former sprint great Cameron Sharp.

Afterwards Lynsey said: "It was the end of such an emotional journey and I'm really glad it's come to an end now and I can move forward. I'm really glad I've got my medal."

Scot Chris O'Hare won the men's 1500m in 3.48:62 and said: "It was really tough, those finishes are always quite nail-biting but it was good to give everybody a good show. I thought with 100m to go, I've just got to keep my form and I'll get it. I took a quick peak back with 50m to go and thought they're closer than I thought, but today I got it by hair."

Guy Learmonth won the 600m much to the delight of the Glasgow

fans.

Afterwards Guy said: "We're here and we're a nation that want to perform on the day. We don't just want to turn up for the tracksuit, but we want to represent Scotland with great pride and honour. The roar of the crowd on the start line was absolutely unbelievable."

Further Scottish success came by way of a dominant sprint victory by Libby Clegg (Keith Antoine) in the women's T12 60m in 7.97, a new personal best

Post race Libby commented: "Obviously I'm really happy with a personal best, because it's an improvement on last year, but I reckon we can go quicker. We've gone sub-eight seconds and it felt easy."

The final result saw the Commonwealth Select take the win ahead of GB & NI with 62 points to 59, the British relay wins proving not quite enough to take the title. The USA finished third with 53 points, with Scotland fourth on 40 points.



Ice Hockey by John Preece

Edinburgh lost their fifth match in a row, in a closely fought contest against Dundee Stars at Dundee. In spite of taking an early lead the first period finished with the Capitals 2-1 down. An exchange of goals in the second period had the Stars maintain their lead at 3-2, before they scored again to lead 4-2 going into the third. The Stars seemed content to hold out, but the Capitals came back with a goal in the 54th minute. But, even taking their keeper off in the final minutes of the match couldn't find them the equaliser and the match finished 4-3 to Dundee.

The Capitals continued their losing streak at home on Sunday night with a 2-1 defeat to Cardiff Devils in another closely

fought match at Murrayfield. (A full report will follow).

Speedway

Edinburgh Monarchs' Max Fricke successfully defended his Australian Under 21 title at Gillman, Adelaide on Saturday evening. This is a remarkable achievement considering that Max is only 17 years old.

Basketball

Dunfermline Reign SM 57-95 Glasgow University SM

City of Edinburgh Kings SM 74-53 Glasgow Storm

Troon Tornadoes SM 61-70 Boroughmuir Blaze SM

St Mirren West College Scotland SM 90-78 Glasgow Rocks SM

Clark Eriksson Fury SM 94-50 Stirling Knights SM

Clark Eriksson Fury SW 38-49 Polonia Phoenix SW

Hockey

Scotland Senior Women produced a win and a defeat in their first two games of the EuroHockey Indoor Nations Championship II in Lithuania, defeating Russia 5-1, before succumbing to Ukraine 9-3 in their second contest of the day.

Against Russia, Heather Elder opened the scoring early in the third minute before doubling the lead for Scotland in the 17th minute to give the national side a two goal lead at the break.

Russia responded early in the second period courtesy of a Yuliia Kazakova before CALA Edinburgh's Amy Brodie restored the two goal advantage from a penalty corner set-play in the 32nd minute.

Elder completed her treble two minutes later to make it 4-1, with captain Vikki Bunce scoring with a reverse stick effort

in the 38th minute to complete a 5-1 victory for her side.

Heather Elder continued where she left off in the second game against Ukraine, opening the scoring for Scotland in the fifth minute of the match. Yana Vorushylo equalised for the Ukrainians in the eighth minute before Bunce restored the lead at 2-1 six minutes later.

The Scots were then hit by a Halyna Hlynenko hat-trick, recording goals from open play in the 16th, 20th and 23rd minute to put her side 4-2 up.

Vorushylo completed her own personal treble with two goals inside a minute shortly afterwards to make it 6-2 to Ukraine.

Yevheniya Moroz grabbed a quick-fire double with strikes in the 28th and 29th minute, before Alona Shatokhina made it 9-2 in the 35th minute.

Just before the end, youngster Jennifer Eadie converted a corner in the 40th minute to leave the final score 9-3 to Ukraine.

Photos by John Preece

<http://www.photoboxgallery.com/jlp-photography>