

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



Rugby by John Preece

Connacht once again demonstrated that the Sportsground is a hard place to travel to – Toulouse being one side to trip up there – with hard fought win against an Edinburgh side who were in the lead at half time. Roddy Grant opened the scoring for the visitors with a try, which Carl Bezuidenhout converted for a 7-0 lead, but Craig Ronaldson pulled three points back with a penalty to go in at half time with the score 7-3 to Edinburgh.

With Du Preez yellow carded after five minutes of the second half, Michael Swift took full advantage of the extra man to score Connacht's only try of the night, with a late penalty from Dan Parks adding to the score to leave Connacht the 11-7 winners. Jack Cuthbert had a try disallowed for crossing, but overall, head coach Alan Solomons was disappointed with both the result and the overall performance. (Photo from Murrayfield)

The RBS Cup Quarter final match at Raeburn Place was postponed 45 minutes before kick-off as the referee deemed the pitch unplayable following a morning of showers. The pitch had passed inspection at 9am, so we were a bit disappointed to turn up just in time for the call-off. However, was there a game on at Inverleith? Well, yes apparently there was, but there was precious little life around at 2pm to suggest there was, so...

(Note to self 'Carry a fixture list...')

Heriots did get to play, however and they had a successful

trip to the Greenyards with a 21-18 win over Melrose to clinch their semi-final place in the RBS Cup.

The National League managed to catch up with some postponed matches from before the Christmas break, with two Edinburgh teams involved. At Inverleith, their rescheduled match – rescheduled from one which, a few weeks ago, was called off in between leaving for the match and getting there! – saw Hillhead/Jordanhill being the latest team to be beaten by a Stewarts-Melville side who have been going well this season, only managing 10 points in the match to Stew-Mel's 34.

At Myreside, it was a different story as Watsonians went down 26-13 to Kelso in another rescheduled match.

This all means that Stewarts-Melville have leap-frogged Watsonians in the league and now lie in second – and the vital play-off place – with 57 points, courtesy of their bonus point win, while Watsonians are now four points adrift in third with 53. Boroughmuir still top the table and are all but promoted with their unassailable points total of 68. Apart from a few mid-table teams, there are now only two rounds left, for 'Sonians, Stew-Mel and, creeping up on the rails, Dundee to sort out the second place finisher.

Football

Hibs got back to winning ways with a 2-1 victory over Ross County at Easter Road on Saturday. First half strikes from teenager Sam Stanton and Tom Taiwo gave the home side a 2-0 halftime lead but a Richie Brittain free kick made it a nervous finish for Terry Butcher's men before the three points were secured.

Elsewhere, Hearts travelled to Inverness and produced a fine performance to grab a share of the points.

Hibs remain in 7th position, one point behind St Johnstone who have two game in hand whilst Hearts are now 16 points adrift

of Partick Thistle.

Off the field, Foundation of Hearts chairman Ian Murray has praised Ann Budge's business experience as the millionaire businesswoman prepares to take control at Tynecastle.

The Edinburgh MP said: "I am delighted to welcome the news that Ann Budge will become executive chairwoman of Hearts, as part of the announcement BIDCO issued," said Murray in a statement. "Ann brings a wealth of experience, and a total belief in the values of supporter ownership through the Foundation of Hearts. I did use the analogy of Dragons Den and that is what we are getting with Ann's wealth of experience.

"[This] news gives a clear indication of what we must achieve to ensure Hearts is in a strong position for the future. We have 7800 monthly contributors, and this can work as BIDCO said, but the more supporters that sign up, the faster any deal can be done. Our projections are also based on very much a worst-case scenario so the more we have will make a huge difference.

"There is an opportunity in front of us, and I am sure we will take it. This is a moment when we can create history."

The South Challenge Cup, Third Round North-&-East Zone

Spartans beat Vale of Leithen 4-1 to progress in the South Challenge Cup.

The home side took a 15th minute through Anderson but the visitors equalised 20 minutes later thanks to Gormley.

Spartans restored their lead a few moments later with a bullet from the head of Ally MacKinnon then in the 55th minute prolific striker Keith McLeod beat Young to the head the ball into the net.

Former Hibs' start Mickey Weir was sent to the stand for foul

and abusive language before McLeod wrapped the game up with 12 minutes remaining.

Gala Fairydean Rovers 1-5 University of Stirling

Scottish Sun Lowland League

Edinburgh City 0-1 East Kilbride

Scottish Sun Lowland League Cup, Groupstage, Section C

Dalbeattie Star 6-1 Threave Rovers

Central Taxis EOS League Premier Division

Coldstream P-P Spartans

Stirling University P-P Craigroyston

Central Taxis EOS League First Division

Duns P-P Burntisland Shipyard

Easthouses Lily P-P Kelso United

Hawick Royal Albert P-P Hibernian

Peebles Rovers P-P Ormiston

South Challenge Cup, Third Round North-&-East Zone

Gala Fairydean Rovers 1-5 University of Stirling

Leith Athletic 3-3 Lothian Thistle HV (AET, Lothian won 6-5 on penalties)

Preston Athletic (LL) P-P Heriot-Watt University

King Cup, First Round

Gretna 2008 P-P Tynecastle

Women's Football

Hibernian Ladies Development Team 6-1 Heart of Midlothian
Development Team 1

Basketball

Glasgow University SM 58-68 Boroughmuir Blaze SM

City of Edinburgh Kings SM 71-59 Troon Tornadoes SM

Glasgow Rocks SM 111-48 Dunfermline Reign SM

St Mirren West College Scotland SM 100-71 Stirling Knights
SM

Clark Eriksson Fury SM 68-49 Glasgow Storm

City of Edinburgh Kool Kats 79-52 St Mirren



Ice Hockey by John Preece

Having lost their last two games Dundee inflicted an 11th straight loss on Edinburgh. Although it must be said the Capitals were still very much in the game until Dundee sealed the win with an empty net goal. It was a dream debut for the Stars recent signing Jack MacLellan as he opened the scoring and also netted the game winner.

There was nothing between the teams in the opening two period. The first period saw them share a goal apiece. The hosts took the lead with only 64 seconds on the clock as MacLellan announced himself to the Tayside faithful. It remained like this until 13.42 when the visitors shocked the home team as Peter Holecko got the Capitals back on level terms.

Despite numerous chances from both teams in the second session neither of them could find the go ahead goal as the period ended goalless with all to play for in the third. Dundee looked to take control of the game as they scored two powerplay goals a minute apart. The first of these came at

46.33 from Brock McPherson and then MacLellan with his second of the game at 47.26. However a powerplay from Curtis Leinweber at 54.03 set up a tense finish to the game. The Capitals pulled the goaltender in the last minute and at 59.50 John Dolan found the empty net to complete the scoring on the night. (Courtesy of the EIHL's R&J Stats)

The return match on Sunday night at Murrayfield gave the Capitals their first win in twelve matches as they beat the Stars 4-3 in an exciting encounter at Murrayfield. First on the board after 41 seconds, the Capitals were 3-2 down by the end of the second period. However, a shorthanded goal to draw level in the third was backed up by a fourth on a powerplay to take the lead 4-3. Despite serious pressure from the Stars late on, the Capitals held to take their first win since the end of December.

Speedway

Scotwaste will remain the team sponsors of Edinburgh Monarchs for the ninth successive season this summer.

Club Chairman Alex Harkess met Scotwaste's recently appointed MD Brian Ramsay at the company's offices this week to finalise the arrangements.

Mr Ramsay told the official website "We didn't have any doubt that we would be continuing with the Monarchs, but I am keen to be a bit more involved this season. I met the club officials for the first time at the Monarchs' dinner-dance last November, and I've seen the team in action a few times.

"I really enjoy the sport and as I said to Alex I'm very pleased to see that Craig Cook is back for this season, the club have done well to secure his services again."

Alex Harkess said "It's vital for the stability of the club that we have a good sponsor and our relationship with Scotwaste over the years has been superb. We are delighted to

have them back on board. Stewart Melrose and his colleagues have become close friends.

“As I have said many times, there is no doubt at all that the period of Scotwaste’s sponsorship has seen us enjoy more success on track than at any other time.”

Meanwhile the Scotwaste Monarchs’ no. 1 Craig Cook has been named by new team manager Alun Rossiter in his first selection, the team for the Great Britain v Rest of the World match which is this year’s Ben Fund Bonanza at Leicester on Sunday 9th March (2pm).

Hockey

Scotland Women Hockey team lost the first three test matches against South Africa at the Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria.

On Friday, the Women lost 5-3 in the opening test match with goals from Ailsa Wylie, Catriona Ralph and Nikki Lloyd then the following day captain Linda Clement and Nikki Lloyd scored as the Women lost 4-2.

On Sunday, the Women found themselves 3-0 down, and South Africa in an unassailable position, in the five-test series after a 4-0 defeat.

Two goals for Celia Evans, and strikes from debutant Toni Marks and Kathleen Taylor gave the South Africans their third victory on the trot. Afterwards Scotland Senior Women Head Coach Gordon Shepherd said: “To be one nil down at half-time was a harsh reward for an excellent first period with some nice passing passages of play and good solid, organised defending, particularly at two penalty corners.

“The players put in an amazing effort today, where the heat took its toll in the end. It was one of those games where the score doesn’t tell the full story.”

Photos by John Preece

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