

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



Rugby by John Preece

Italy U20 v Scotland U20

The young Scots were beaten, once again, by an impressive performance from their U20 opponents – this time Italy – to go down 32-13. On the scoreboard first with a Ben Chalmers' penalty, Scotland had no answer to Italy's three, converted first half tries. Supplemented by a single penalty, the Italians lead 24-3 at half time. The Scots did have some good passages of play, but couldn't take great advantage of any possession. Near the end of the half, things got a little fighty, so the referee had to call the captains in for a quiet word once things had calmed down.

The second half went better for Scotland, with a try after a few minutes to take the score up to 24-8. In spite of losing a player to the bin, Scotland held the score and went over for another, unconverted try, when back to 15. However, they gave the opposition another penalty chance with less than ten minutes to go, which was scored and they then followed this up, with four minutes of play left, with their fourth try to bring the final tally up to 32-13

Italy v Scotland

Rome's Stadio Olimpico was the venue for Scotland's third match in this year's RBS 6 Nations and they were going there on the back of two inglorious defeats so far. The first half was dominated by the referee continually penalising Moray Low at the scrum and he was eventually replaced just before the break. An early penalty exchange saw the sides level at 3-3,

before Tommy Allan took the lead for Italy in the 30th minute. With the clock running down to half time, Italy won turnover ball in the Scots' 22, and Allan managed to find a gap to cross the line near the posts. Converting his own try, the half time score was 13-3 to Italy.

Scotland followed up an early second half penalty with a fine try from Alex Dunbar, following a passing phase which left Dunbar with a 30 metre sprint to the line, running over Allan in the process. Greig Laidlaw missed the kick, so the score was 13-11 to Italy.

With Laidlaw replaced by Chris Cusiter, the 63rd minute had Scotland on the scoreboard again with another Dunbar try, this time from much further out than 30 metres. Duncan Weir converted to give Scotland at 18-13 lead. Italy however, came back inside 10 minutes with a try from Josh Furno, the huge lock brushing Hogg aside on his way through. With Urquera's conversion, the home side lead 20-18 with just minutes left. The match wasn't over, though, and the Scots fought and hammered their way into Italian territory and in the 80th minute, a fine Cusiter pass found Weir in the pocket for the Glasgow man to send over a superbly struck drop kick to snatch victory in the dying seconds, 21-20 to Scotland.

Italy Women v Scotland Women

At the time of 'going to press' the match report was not yet available, but a bit of Twitter reporting noted that Italy scored 45 unanswered points before Scotland came up with a try of their own to finish off the match 45-5.

Llanelli Scarlets v Edinburgh Rugby

With 12 minutes on the clock, Edinburgh had opened up a 10-0 lead on the home side courtesy of a Nick De Luca try and a conversion and penalty from Carl Bezuidenhout. The Scarlets then came back with two penalties from Aled Thomas and a try from Jordan Williams to draw level, before another try from

Williams gave the home side an 18-13 lead at half time. Tom Brown scored an early try for Edinburgh to draw them level, but a third Llanelli try just before halfway, saw them into a 25-18 lead. Unfortunately, in spite of a much improved performance of late, Edinburgh had to settle for the bonus point via a penalty on 70 minutes from Jack Cuthbert which took the final score to 25-21 to Scarlets.

RBS Cup.

As reported elsewhere, Edinburgh Accies were defeated 13-8 by a superb performance from Aberdeen Grammar at the very windy Murrayfield 3G pitch, Raeburn place being deemed 'possibly' unplayable. Should they have risked it? If the match hadn't been played, then a draw of the cards – yes, really! – would have determined the result!

Football

Gordon Strachan's Scotland will face Germany, The Republic of Ireland, Poland Georgia and Gibraltar in their bid to qualify for the 2016 European Championships.

Strachan was present at the draw which was made in Euro 2016 host nation France on Sunday.

This will be Gibraltar's first foray into international football, in fact last summer they lost 3-1 in a friendly against Hibs.

Scotland will be aiming to qualify for a major tournament for the first time since the 1998 World Cup, which was also held in France.

SPFL

In the SPFL, Hearts lost 2-0 to Celtic despite a brave performance from the youngsters. After a goalless first half, the hoops took the lead when former Hibs' striker Leigh Griffiths latched onto an Anthony Stokes pass before beating

Danny Wilson on the edge of the box and firing in an unstoppable shot past Jamie MacDonald.

With Hearts' pressing for an equaliser, Celtic added a second in the dying minute following a mistake by Jamie Hamill on the touchline when he was dispossessed by Amido Balde who then calmly passed to the unmarked Teemu Pukki who slotted the ball home.

With results elsewhere going against the Tynecastle side, Hearts are now 18 points behind St Mirren at the foot of the table.

Hibs travelled to Rugby Park and Terry Butcher retained the same starting XI who triumphed over Ross County last week, leaving captain Liam Craig on the bench.

Kilmarnock opened the scoring against the run of play in the 18th minute when Kris Boyd found Rory McKenzie with a 50 yard pass and the midfielder angled drive beat Ben Williams.

Hibs fought back and grabbed a deserved equaliser 10 minutes after the break when Sam Stanton's inch perfect cross was headed home by on loan striker Danny Haynes.

Hibs had the better of the second half, but were unable to capitalise on their dominance.

Hibs are now level on points with sixth place St Johnstone on 32 points with the Perth side ahead on goal difference.

After the game Terry Butcher said: "I'm disappointed that we didn't win the game, particularly after the way we dominated the second half. Unfortunately, there was a lack of real goalscoring opportunities due to our final ball so there will be plenty of crossing and shooting for the boys next week.

Scottish Youth Cup

Hearts made it through to the semi-final of the tournament

with a 3-0 win over Queens Park at Tynecastle on Sunday with the goals coming from Dale Carrick, Gary Oliver and Nathan Flannigan.

Image Printers Cup

Spartans beat Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale 2-1 at Ainslie Park to secure a place in the final of the Image Printers Cup.

Spartans took the lead in the 13th minute when Jack Beesley wrong foot Lothian keeper Kevin Swain, before placing his shot into the bottom corner.

Lothian equalised six minutes later when Alan Brown was judged to fouled Lloyd Dignan inside the area and referee Lorraine Clark pointed to the spot. John Williams dispatched the ball into the bottom right corner, just beyond the reach of Scott Bennett.

Spartans regained the lead in the 36th minute with a fine goal from Willie Bremner after some good work by Beesley.

Both teams had chances in the second half but the north Edinburgh side held on to take the honours.

Manager Dougie Samuel told the club website after the game: "It's great to reach another final. Today's game was stop start and a scrappy affair at times. Lothian were positive and committed players forward throughout. Both of our goals were fantastic, especially the 2nd. A great pass by Beezer to create it and a fine finish from Willie."

In the other semi-final Leith Athletic went down 3-4 to Whitehill Welfare

Elsewhere

Threave Rovers P Abbey Vale

University of Stirling P Selkirk

Vale of Leithen P Gala Fairydean Rovers

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

Preston Athletic 5-1 Heriot-Watt University

Southern Counties Cup, First Round

Dalbeattie Star 7-0 St Cuthbert Wanderers

Central Taxis First Division

Berwick Rangers Reserves 4-2 Hawick Royal Albert

Ormiston P-P Hibernian EOS

King Cup, First Round

Burntisland Shipyard 1-2 Coldstream

Easthouses Lily MW 6-0 Eyemouth United

Edinburgh City (LL) 3-0 Civil Service Strollers

Gretna 2008 (LL) 2-2 Tynecastle (Gretna won 4-2 on Penalties)

Kelso United 0-5 Edinburgh University



Ice Hockey by John Preece

Again as reported elsewhere, Edinburgh Capitals came back from a two-goal deficit, on Saturday, to draw level with Fife Flyers, before the Flyers scored a third goal in the 14th minute of the third period to take the win 3-2.

Edinburgh's Sunday night game was away at Coventry Blaze, who lie in seventh place in the league, three places above the Capitals. And it was to prove a truly miserable trip, with the Blaze putting eight goals past Edinburgh's 'keeper, with only a loss of two, Hartmann and Leinweber scoring for the

Capitals.

Speedway

Edinburgh Scotwaste Monarchs are now entering a critical period as they make the final push to raise the necessary funds to have their airfence in position for the start of the new season now just five weeks away.

The Monarchs are very hopeful that the Brief History of Speedway Racing in Edinburgh at Meggetland on 14th March will add significantly to the fund and although tickets have been selling very well for this event they still have a number available for what promises to be an evening full of interest and nostalgia.

One or two other ideas are still in the pipeline and the Monarchs hope to bring details of these within the next seven days.

One of their early fundraisers was the Scotwaste Monarchs 2014 calendar. With just 16% of the year gone the price of the calendar has been reduced by a massive 50%. The remaining calendars can be purchased through the Club Shop for £3 plus postage.

The Air Fence Fund has continued to increase since the beginning of this month and now stands at £14,097.90.

Basketball

Dunfermline Reign SM 60-94 City of Edinburgh Kings SM

Troon Tornadoes SM 62-71 Clark Eriksson Fury SM

Boroughmuir Blaze SM 92-93 St Mirren West College Scotland SM

Glasgow Storm 57-75 Glasgow University SM

City of Edinburgh Kool Kats SW 87-55 Tayside Musketeers SW

Hockey

Scotland Senior Women finished their warm weather training camp and international series with a 4-1 loss to South Africa in Pretoria on Wednesday, losing the series 5-0. Scotland's goal came from Edinburgh University forward Sam Judge.

Afterwards Scotland Senior Women Head Coach Gordon Shepherd said, "We were much improved today and the standard of performance was much better. We competed against South Africa, a side who are right at their peak after their summer programme.

"We did make mistakes at crucial times [during the series] and we were heavily punished by a pacey, clinical and well drilled team now on way to Argentina for a Test Series. However, the experience has been a great start to a Commonwealth Games year and the players have benefitted massively from being here as a squad

Photos by John Preece

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