

The Edinburgh Reporter's Weekly Sports Roundup



Rugby by John Preece

Internationals

The last weekend of the 2014 6 Nations saw Scottish representative teams

The U20s were first on the cards against Wales at Parc Eirias in Colwyn Bay, and, in spite of book-ending the match with two tries, the Scots had no answer to a rampant Welsh side.

Scoring their first try after five minutes the Scots support then had to endure the sight of Welshmen breaking through tackles and getting over the gain line, seemingly at will. The managed to run in three tries by half time, with the Scots only other contribution to the 19-10 score line, a penalty after 31 minutes.

Another four second half tries for the home side put the match beyond any doubt and it was only a 28-phase drive, awarded by a second try, which gave a bit of credibility to the Scots' effort with a dogged refusal to lie down, but the final score of 48-15 put that last few minutes into perspective.

Again, the penalty count told, and two yellow cards for the Scots did nothing to help the situation. And with the Junior World Cup in New Zealand on the horizon, it doesn't get any easier for Sean Lineen.

Final U20 6 Nations 'score' – Scotland U20 – 0, The Rest U20 – 5. Points for – 63, Against – 175.

The Senior side were at the Millennium Stadium for their match

where Scott Johnson presided over his last match as Scotland's head coach. Sadly, he presided over a record 51-3 hammering by a Welsh side still smarting from the previous week's defeat by England. Losing Stuart Hogg to a red card for a late tackle on Dan Biggar's chin halfway through the first half made the task even more difficult for the Scots, but Wales were always the better team. 27-3 down at half time, Scotland battled away, but the man short – leaving new man, Dougie Fife marking 2-3 players – meant that the home side were able to get easily round the outside of the defence. A period of dominance by Scotland half way through the second period, which resulted in several penalties within a few metres of the Welsh line, went unrewarded and, disappointingly, unpunished by the referee. The Welsh rounded off a bad day for Scotland with a 73rd minute try to take the final score to that 51-3.

Final 6 Nations 'score' – Scotland – 1, The Rest – 4. Points for – 47, Against – 138.

The third and final encounter over the weekend involved Scotland's Women who were playing their Welsh counterparts in Aberavon. By half time the Welsh were four tries and a penalty to the good to give them a 25-0 lead. The second half was a wholly different affair, however. Scotland defended well and managed to prevent the superior Welsh side from adding to their points tally, but didn't manage to add any of their own in the process so the match ended with the same score as at half time, 25-0 to Wales.

Final Women's 6 Nations 'score' 0 Scotland 0, The Rest – 5. Points for – 5. Against – 261

So another poor year for the National sides with just one win from a possible 15. There are suggestions aplenty as to where the U20s can go (see 'Comments' on the full match report), and, with Vern Cotter – a man of great reputation – arriving at the end of the season to take over from Johnson, then maybe there is a way forward for the Senior team. The women,

however, may well be a permanent fixture at the foot of their table until something is done attract more women into the sport. The ones who are already 'in' could also do with more support and a healthy increase in their current, fairly paltry, budget. When it's said they play for the shirt, they do. It's just that they have to hand it in at the end of each match so it can be laundered for next time....

Club Rugby

Only one match was played in the Premiership on Saturday and that was the rescheduled due to waterlogged pitch/Cup tie/Club International match between Edinburgh Accies and Heriots at Raeburn Place. With Accies in seventh place in the table and only two points above the relegation zone, it was an important match for the Stockbridge team. However, Heriots proved to be too strong and their 26-14 win leaves Accies in seventh and in potential trouble. The result means that Heriots have all but secured a place in the British and Irish Cup for next season as they are currently in third, two points above Ayr – who have a game in hand – but, crucially, are 24 points ahead of fifth place Currie. And who would have thought they'd be there halfway through the season.

Next week the focus swings to the National League as Watsonians and Stewarts-Melville battle it out for the play-off place. Watsonians need to win and prevent Stew-Mel from gaining a bonus point as they have a superior point difference, but Stew-Mel just need one point from the match for them to play-off ninth place from the Premiership.

Football SPFL

Congratulations to Sam Stanton who was voted SPFL Young Player of the Month for February.

On Saturday, Hibs lost 3-1 to Partick Thistle at Firhill, leaving them 4 points behind St Johnstone having played a game more in the race for the final top six spot.

Chris Erskine gave Thistle a half time lead then Lee Mair added a second before on loan winger Duncan Watmore pulled one back for the Easter Road side.

Man of the Match Kallum Higginbotham wrapped things up in time added on to secure the 3-1 win.

Elsewhere, the Hibs EOS won promotion to the Central Taxi's East of Scotland Premier League after beating Ormiston 4-2.

Hearts had no game this weekend but play Dundee United at Tynecastle on Friday night.



South Challenge Cup, First Round (all in)

Keith McLeod's fourth hat-trick of the season helped send Spartans progress into the South Challenge Cup semi-finals, with a 1-7 win against Nithsdale Wanderers.

The opening goal came in the 11th minute from a superb Jack Beesley free-kick from 25 yards before McLeod added a second with a header from a Brown cross.

McLeod claimed his second just after the break before Wanderers pulled one back from the penalty spot.

Bremner made it 1-4 then set up McLeod who grabbed his fourth hat-trick of the season.

Sean Muhsin, added a sixth and Beesley made it 1-7 just on the full time whistle.

The victory pleased Manager Dougie Samuel who told the club website: "We produced a professional performance today that I'm delighted with. At times our ball retention and link-up play was excellent. I also thought some of our goals were top drawer as was the support play, in particular I felt Mark Whatley produced a complete central midfield performance and

was back to his very best.”

Spartans: Bennett, Grant, Cennerazzo, Sivewright, O'Donnell, Motion, Brown, Whatley, Anderson, McLeod, Beesley. Subs: Bremner, Muhsin, Blaikie, MacCuish, Gilpin.

Malt and Hops Man of the Match: Keith McLeod

Elsewhere

Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale 2-1 Threave Rovers

Preston Athletic (LL) 0-5 Dalbeattie Star

East Kilbride (LL) 2-1 University of Stirling

Central Taxis First Division

Ormiston 2-4 Hibernian EOS

Berwick Rangers Reserves 2-0 Easthouses Lily MW

Hawick Royal Albert 4-0 Burntisland Shipyard

Peebles Rovers 4-0 Kelso United

Qualifying League, Section A

Tynecastle 2-0 Eyemouth United

Qualifying League, Section C

Leith Athletic 1-2 Craigroyston

King Cup, Second Round

Whitehill Welfare 5-2 Gala Fairydean Rovers

Vale of Leithen 0-2 Edinburgh University

Gretna 2008 3-3 Coldstream (Gretna won 5-4 on penalties)



Ice Hockey by John Preece

Edinburgh Capitals 1 Sheffield Steelers 3

Steelers all but ensured runners up spot in the league standings with a road win in Edinburgh, with Capitals putting up stiff resistance but always looking that bit short of really testing a strong looking visitors.

It was the visitors very much in the ascendancy in the opening period but some fine goaltending by Tomas Hiadlovsky allowed only a goal scored by Stefan Meyer at 16.29 to split the sides.

In the middle session Steelers missed an opportunity when Robert Dowd failed on a penalty shot at 26.14 but shortly afterwards it was 2-0 to the visitors with Max Lacroix firing past Hiadlovsky timed at 28.21.

Steelers looked to be well in control in period three but when Capitals pulled one back at 51.33 thanks to a strike by Curtis Leinweber it ensured an exciting finish and only when Meyer fired into the empty net with 8 seconds of regulation remaining were the points assured for Steelers.

On Sunday, the Capitals travelled to Cardiff and lost 7-2 to the Devils.

Ice hockey reports courtesy of EIHL's R&J Stats

Basketball

Clark Eriksson Fury retained their league title having gone all season unbeaten to be crowned Senior Men League winners for two years running on the back of lifting the Scottish Cup at the Finals in February, showcasing the team's power repeatedly throughout the season.

Clark Eriksson Fury U18 Men team didn't want to be eclipsed by their Senior team mates and took the U18 Men league title,

cementing their position for the upcoming Play Offs.

City of Edinburgh Kools Kats lead the chase on the women's side, with their Senior Women and U18 women rising to the top in their respective leagues, the Seniors took their title in a winner takes all league decider at Portobello against their old rival Lady Rocks while the U18's secured their title with games to spare.

St Mirren West College Scotland came up trumps again collecting their 3rd consecutive U16 women league after a very consistent season.

Dunfermline Reign took the U16 Men's league, making history for the club which hadn't won a 1st Division title since Former GB International and NBA star Robert Archibald led them to an U18s title in 1998!

Glasgow University SM 86-76 Glasgow Rocks SM

Boroughmuir Blaze SM 87-63 Glasgow Storm

Lady Rocks SW 66-45 Tayside Musketeers SW

University Basketball

Edinburgh University men are through to the final of the British Universities Basketball Trophy after an 89-84 victory over Derby in their semi-final.

Edinburgh now play Northampton in the final at Surrey Sports Park on Tuesday, March 25.

Speedway

The Scotwaste Monarchs' History Night at Meggetland was a remarkable success and a big boost to the Air Fence Fund as some 250 fans gathered in two halls to listen to the story of the Monarchs and their pre-war predecessors over 85 years.

Photos by John Preece

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