

This Weekend's Rugby Round-up



4-try Damien Hoyland closing down against Ontario at Meggetland

Professional Rugby

Nelson Mandela Bay Sevens

Despite two resilient performances today and reaching the Plate semi-finals, Scotland 7s were unable to record a victory on day two at the Nelson Mandela Bay 7s. The team did however, climb up another position, to eighth in the circuit standings. On day two, of the third leg of the World Series, Scotland lost out to Argentina in a very close match that was decided in extra-time. Argentina capitalised on Scotland's errors and won 24-19. This was then followed by a defeat to USA, which ended, 26-19.

Head Coach, Calum MacRae, said: "We spoke as a group about backing up the performances from Dubai and qualifying for the Cup again. That has been achieved and sees us move into the top eight, on the circuit. "We have areas to improve on and will continue to work hard between now and Wellington. The experiences our rookie players, such as Nyle [Godsmark], Damien [Hoyland] and Gavin [Lowe], gained the past two weeks have been invaluable".

"We were down to nine players today, which meant everyone who was fit had to roll up their sleeves. I'm proud of the heart they all showed. A lot of the tries we scored were top drawer. We moved defences around, until we unlocked them and we put into practice what we've been working on in training. This is something the guys can take confidence from looking forward to Wellington."

It was a heartbreaking result for the Scots in the quarter-final, as they looked to qualify for their fourth ever Cup semi-final in a HSBC Sevens World Series tournament. The Scots were leading with five minutes to go, 19-12 following tries from James Johnstone, in the first-half and then from Colin Gregor and Damien Hoyland in the second period. However, their opponents capitalised on mistakes and levelled the match as the clock counted down, through Santiago Ordero. The conversion here was imperative and Javier Rojas Alvarez struck it with ease. Things looked up as Scotland opted to take the extra-time restart and won the kick, but a series of forced errors saw Francisco Merello make a break and score the sudden-death try.

Against USA, Scotland took an early lead through Hoyland, who has taken to the short-game very well over the past two weekends, in Dubai and South Africa. This was highlighted by the Edinburgh Rugby winger's finishing ability. He scored four tries in PE. However, their opponents bounced back and went in at the break, 12-5 up, following tries from former Glasgow Warrior, Carlin Isles and Madison Hughes. At the beginning of the second-half Scotland levelled the scores with Johnstone crossing the whitewash, but unfortunately USA turned the contest up a gear and a further two tries followed from Isles and Martin Iosefo, enough to seal the win. Gregor managed to score a third Scotland try in the last play of the game, but it was too little too late. Gregor converted two of the three tries against USA.

South Africa 7s day two

Scotland 19-24 Argentina (Cup quarter-final) – after extra-time

Tries: James Johnstone, Colin Gregor and Damien Hoyland

Scotland 19-26 USA (Plate semi-final)

Tries: Damien Hoyland, James Johnstone and Colin Gregor

South Africa 7s day one

Scotland 12-14 Canada

Tries: Lee Jones and Damien Hoyland

Scotland 19-12 France


Tries: James Eddie (2) and James Johnstone

Scotland 12-19 Fiji

Tries: Scott Riddell and Damien Hoyland

The team's attention will now move to the New Year and the fourth leg of the HSBC Sevens World Series in Wellington, New Zealand (Friday 6 and Saturday 7 February 2014). The Scots will face Argentina, Kenya and Samoa there, in Pool D.

Edinburgh Rugby

 *50-cap Greg Tonks (left) in action against London Welsh at BT Murrayfield*

Edinburgh made it four from four with another win over London Welsh in the European Rugby Challenge Cup.

Lead by 50th Cap, Greg Tonks, the Edinburgh side endured a nervous first quarter, only relieved by an 18th minute penalty from Sam Hidalgo-Clyne. He followed this up with another two before the break. Welsh managed to draw level at 3-3 following a yellow card for Andries Strauss, but couldn't add any more in the first half, the visitors going in with a 9-3 lead.

An exchange of penalties in the first 10 minutes of the second half maintained Edinburgh's six-point lead before Dougie Fife scored the first try of the match on 60 minutes.

The final quarter was dominated by Edinburgh, who were duly awarded with a Stuart McInally try with three minutes to go.

Tonks scored with the kick to give Edinburgh a match winning 24-6 score.

Club Rugby

BT Premiership

With Currie v Boroughmuir postponed at Maleny Park due to a frozen pitch, Heriots v Edinburgh Accies was the only top flight match played in Edinburgh, Heriots winning 32-20.

Following last week's win at Stirling, Heriots are now four points clear at the top of the table with 51 points. Currie are still in sixth with 29 points, while Accies and 'Muir have swapped places – both on 19 points – with the Meggetland side propping up the table in tenth courtesy of points scored difference.

BT National League, Div. 1

Both Inverleith and Myreside were deemed unplayable on Saturday, leaving Stewarts-Melville and Watsonians nothing better to do than watch the European Cup Rugby on the telly.

Both sides maintain their third and fourth places, but Stew-Mel's win last week stretches their lead over their Morningside rivals to six points with 43.

(Both images – John Preece)