

Edinburgh v Newport Gwent Dragons

EDINBURGH V NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS

15TH APRIL 2010

by Stewart Primrose

Last weekend's defeat away to bottom side Connacht was a huge blow to Rob Moffat's side, and the coach will know they may need to win every game left this campaign to secure one of the play-off spots.

It wasn't a bad performance by Edinburgh in Ireland. They were in control for much of the match and were unlucky to lose by a solitary point. However, at this stage of the season performances are secondary to results.

The trip to Wales is a tricky one, and the Dragons know they will need to collect all four points to put themselves back in the hunt for a top four finish. Defeat and their remaining fixtures become meaningless.

This makes it all the more harder because, if they had nothing to play for the Welsh side may have an extra edge taken off their game, but they know this is their last chance to do something this year.

However, it's all in Edinburgh's hands. They currently sit in the all important fourth position, just one point ahead of rivals Glasgow. Glasgow, however, have amore favourable run-in, highlighted this weekend when they play host to Ulster at Firhill.

Edinburgh, as well, face Ulster next week in what is their final home match of the season. Then they will finish up with a tough trip to Ireland to face Leinster, the current league leaders. Glasgow, on the other hand, face Leinster at home and Scarlets away respectively.

Defeat this weekend would not be catastrophic for Edinburgh, but they would then give the initiative back to Glasgow, who

should take care of a poor Ulster side.

A failure to reach the play-offs this year will be extremely disappointing for Edinburgh and not the start Moffat was hoping for in his maiden season as first team coach after Andy Robinson took over the International affairs.

After the good start to the season, Edinburgh simply must make the top four. Anything after that will be seen as a bonus, but last years runners-up finish has meant expectation has heightened for the future.

For too long Scottish rugby has been in the doldrums, but after some impressive displays by Scotland in the Six Nations, which brought about mixed results, there is more optimism that the sport is ready for a bullish upturn in fortunes.

It is good to see both the Scottish clubs challenging at the top end of the table, but they still lag way behind the top two Irish clubs, Munster and Leinster. However, until finances improve, this is likely to last a little longer.

All Moffat and Edinburgh can do presently is to make sure they pick as many points as possible, which will hopefully be enough for them to finish at least fourth. They have played well for most of the season and will no doubt feel they deserve to be there. If not, and they slip-up in the remaining fixtures, they will only have themselves to blame.