

# Rugby – Edinburgh v Llanelli



*Edinburgh v Llanelli Scarlets, RaboDirect PR012, 30 March 2012*

Edinburgh narrowly missed enhancing the club record achieved the previous week in the RaboDirect/Magners/Celtic league by squeaking the win over Welsh visitors, the Llanelli Scarlets, in the last few minutes of the game at Murrayfield.

Llanelli opened the scoring early on with a penalty from Rhys Priestland, followed almost immediately with one for Edinburgh from Greg Laidlaw, whose boot was to prove flawless the whole night. Another from Laidlaw with 17 minutes gone saw Edinburgh nudge ahead 6-3, after a period of play which saw neither team gain a decisive foothold.

The breakthrough for the home side came just four minutes later with a powerful surge from the forwards which left the ball in the hands of David Denton. He was stopped short of the line by a whole bunch of people, but managed to stretch out an Inspector Gadget-like arm to ground the ball on the line. With the successful kick from Laidlaw, Edinburgh were 13-3 to the good. Priestland pulled back a few points with another penalty, but with a few minutes to go in the half, Llanelli managed to implode a bit and with two yellow cards in quick succession, they were down to 13 men. The second card gave the men in black a scrum on the Scarlets five-metre line and, with the scrum maintaining the dominance that had seen the Scarlets pack pushed about the field the whole game, another collapse gave referee Peter Fitzgibbon no choice but to award Edinburgh a penalty try. A nice, simple conversion from Laidlaw and the half ended 20-6 to Edinburgh.

The second half was a different affair altogether. Priestland got early points on the board for the Welsh, before a cross-

field passing move left winger, Andy Fenby, with a reasonably easy route to the try line. With Priestland scoring the kick, the game now stood at 20-13. Another penalty from Laidlaw, followed up by a howler of a miss in front of the posts from Stephen Jones stretched the lead a little, but Jones soon pulled one back to keep the Scarlets a converted try behind. And it wasn't long before the required try brought the visitors level. With the forwards recycling successfully from an incursion deep into Edinburgh's 22, the ball came out to the backs and ended up with centre Jon Davies. With only Tom Brown between him and the try-line, he crashed into the Edinburgh full-back – with an impact which could be heard on the side-lines – and his momentum carried him over the line. A quick wriggle and the ball was grounded for the Scarlets second try. Jones converted the kick to draw the Welsh side level 23-23, with 14 minutes of the match to go, and Brown left the field too 'damaged' to continue.

Six of those 14 minutes were spent getting Edinburgh up into the Scarlets half, where another infringement left Laidlaw with one of his easier penalties of the night to put Edinburgh within touching distance of the win. No pressure then. But he'd brought his kicking boots with him and his sixth successful kick left the Scarlets trailing by three points, 26-23.

The match ended with another breakdown penalty from the Scarlets inside the Edinburgh 22 which left nothing for Laidlaw to do but boot the ball into the stand.

The win sees Edinburgh still in 11th place in the league, but a bit closer to Connacht. However, this season has seen two Edinburgh sides. The one which can seemingly do no wrong in the Heineken Cup – at least up until now – and the one which can barely buy a win in the RaboDirect league. Very strange..

And the record? Edinburgh ended their longest run of seven

consecutive defeats in the league with Friday night's close shave win.

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