

McInally starts for Edinburgh rugby against Saracens



[Edinburgh](#) rugby star Stuart McInally has been rewarded for his fine early season form with a starting berth in the club's opening Heineken Cup match against Saracens on Saturday.

McInally is selected at Number 8 ahead of Fijian Netani Talei in a strong line-up as the capital side look to emulate last year's European performances when they reached the semi-final stage for the first time in their history.

Head coach Michael Bradley says that 2011's experience in Europe's premier club competition has left everyone connected with Edinburgh eager to experience more of the same this season. Bradley said:- "The Heineken Cup is the best club rugby competition on the planet and it's the one that every player and club wants to be part of. It's a very special competition and we're all very excited to get started.

"The support we received in last season's competition was exceptional and undoubtedly played a massive part in the successes we enjoyed here at Murrayfield. The pressure, the pace, and the physicality, combined with the heightened tension and suspense are what makes this such a special tournament."

Scotland props Allan Jacobsen and Geoff Cross find themselves relegated to the bench with Welshman John Yapp and South African Willem Nel starting in the front row alongside Scotland captain Ross Ford. The presence of four internationalists in Jacobsen, Cross, Talei, and England's Andy Titterrell, amongst the replacements underlines the new-found strength of depth in the Edinburgh squad. Bradley acknowledges this while conceding that the English club will

provide a tough examination of his squad's ability. Bradley said:- "Our opening pool match will pose a serious test for our squad and will give us a good understanding of where we are as a team.

"We face a side which, I expect, will use a strong kicking game and very a combative defense to try and keep the game in our third of the field."

McInally is one of six changes from last weeks disappointing home defeat against Italian side Trevisio. Yapp, Tom Brown, Richie Rees, Ross Rennie and Nick De Luca are the other new faces.

Edinburgh Rugby team to play Saracens at Murrayfield Stadium in Heineken Cup round one (kick-off 1.35pm)

15 Tom Brown

14 Lee Jones

13 Nick De Luca

12 Matt Scott

11 Tim Visser

10 Greig Laidlaw CAPTAIN

9 Richie Rees

1 John Yapp

2 Ross Ford

3 Willem Nel

4 Grant Gilchrist

5 Sean Cox

6 David Denton

7 Ross Rennie

8 Stuart McInally

Substitutes

16 Andy Titterrell

17 Allan Jacobsen

- 18** Geoff Cross
- 19** Robert McAlpine
- 20** Netani Talei
- 21** Chris Leck
- 22** Harry Leonard
- 23** Dougie Fife