

Edinburgh v Glasgow 1872 Cup



The 1872 Cup is the annual, two match competition held between Edinburgh and Glasgow, within the remit of the usual RaboDirect PR012 league. Awarding of the trophy is based on the aggregate score over the two games. With the first match going the way of the Warriors, at Scotstoun by 23 points to 14, Edinburgh had a bit of catching up to do when the Glasgow side travelled East to the Capital for the match on 29 December 2012.

And the deficit only took six minutes of the first half to increase by another five points. With Glasgow battling their way up into the home 22, a ruck a few metres out ensured that the Edinburgh defence was well occupied, enabling Ruaridh Jackson to get the ball out to Sean Maitland who dived over for the opener. With Peter Horne missing the kick, Glasgow lead 5-0. With 13 minutes on the clock and Edinburgh on the attack, an off-the-ball, 'dump' tackle on Tim Visser saw Horne off the field for ten minutes, allowing Greg Laidlaw to pull three points back from the resultant penalty. Edinburgh, however were unable to take any more advantage from the extra man, in spite of having an extra ten metres added to a penalty due to a bit of 'referee niggling' from the visitors, which Laidlaw pulled wide.

☒ Indeed it was Glasgow who struck next. Not long after full back, Greg Tonks made a try-saving tackle on Horne, a quick penalty take from Edinburgh saw Jackson intercept a long pass from Peirs Francis to run in Glasgow's second try of the match. Horne hit the post with the conversion attempt to keep the score at 10-3. Two successful kicks from Horne, both from penalties, before the half time break left Glasgow with a 16-3 lead and Edinburgh with a mountain to climb.

Within 10 minutes of the restart, the Warriors suffered another last-ditch tackle to prevent their third try, and Sean Lamont 'butchered' another. However, 12 minutes in, Allan Jacobsen was yellow carded for handling in the ruck and Glasgow opted for the scrum. Securing ball from the base, Henry Pyrgos squeezed his way under the tackle from Visser to ground the ball on the line. The ref went up to the TMO for confirmation and Glasgow were 21-3 ahead. Horne managed to miss this kick as well, on a poor night for kicking.

At this point, Edinburgh coach, Michael Bradley, had seen enough, and brought on Richie Rees and Ben Atiga to replace Francis and James King. With Laidlaw moving out to 10 – widely regarded (by those in 'the know') as his best position – it appeared that the hosts had brought on another three men! From a line-out, Laidlaw put a chip kick in behind the defence which Matt Scott broke through to gather, and his off-load to Roddy Grant put the flanker over the line for Edinburgh's first try. With Laidlaw slotting the kick over, the score stood at 21-10 to the Warriors.

The visitors then proceeded to waste another golden opportunity, when DTH van der Merwe broke through the flailing defence – slowed down on the big screen, 'ghosted through' doesn't do his run justice – and handed the ball to Stuart Hogg five metres out. The full back, with nobody to beat, proceeded to throw the ball over the line with a classic piece of mishandled fumbling.

✘ With all their subs on the pitch, Lamont was pulled off injured to leave the Warriors with 14 men for the second time and Edinburgh took full advantage this time around. Deep in the 22, Rhys had a probe at the defence and then handed the ball inside to Visser, who was never going to be stopped at full tilt from less than ten metres out. Try scored, conversion kicked and still five minutes left. It wasn't to be, however, as Glasgow regained possession from a ruck on full time and van der Merwe launched the ball into the West

Stand to take the match 21-17 and the trophy, collected by a rather battered and bloody, Al Kellock.

One bright note for Edinburgh was Tim Visser's try. That was his 11th try of the season and his 48th in the league, equalling Tommy Bowe's all time RaboDirect scoring record. And still half the season to go.

More questions then. Why can Edinburgh play out of their skins in the final 25-30 minutes of a match? Did Bradley swap over too many players at the start of the season? Was Francis a 'bad buy' at 10 (he's not been great since his first game)? Is there a future for Bradley at Edinburgh? And, perhaps the biggest one, have they still got Andy Robinson's contact details...?

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