

# Rugby – Edinburgh Rugby v Newport-Gwent Dragons



## Edinburgh Rugby v Newport-Gwent Dragons, RaboDirect PR012

Edinburgh welcomed the Dragons from Newport in Wales for the last match of the season for both teams. A 'dead rubber', the teams were playing for pride alone as Edinburgh were in 10th, and the Dragons in 11th, place in the RaboDirect PR012 table. Played in damp, and occasionally torrentially wet, conditions, Edinburgh – in spite of their best efforts in the second half – managed to come away with the win.

Prop, Allan Jacobsen's, last match started with a bang – for the Dragons! Less than five minutes in, a well worked move from the base of the scrum, handed the ball to Steffan Jones, who raced away to open the scoring for the visitors. Tom Prydie scored with the kick and 7-0 it was. For the next ten minutes the game see-sawed back and forth, with the Welsh side just shading the possession, until a break from Stuart McInally and Netani Talei – also playing his last match for the club – drove the ball up to the five metre line to win a penalty. With the referee playing advantage, Harry Leonard lobbed the ball over the defence for Greg Tonks to run onto in the goal area and score the opener for Edinburgh. Greg Laidlaw then stuck the conversion between the posts to draw the hosts level at 7-7.

The next five minutes, or so, were again dominated by Edinburgh and a ruck on the goal line was exploited by Laidlaw, who dived over for the second Edinburgh try. Unusually, Laidlaw missed the conversion so the score now stood at 12-7. Another five minutes of play, another try. With

the visitors seemingly having no answer to the Edinburgh attacking play, it was Talei's turn to crash over the line for the third Edinburgh try. Line out ball put the home side in a good position to drive upfield, and Grant Gilchrist took the ball into contact, from where Talei gathered possession and broke through a couple of tackles to score to the right of the posts (pictured). Laidlaw made no mistake this time and the home side were leading 19-7 and looking on for the win.

✖ Just after the restart, a rather unseemly scuffle lead to Andrew Coombs and Sean Cox seeing yellow, followed soon after by the Dragon's Ross Wardle for a dangerous tackle. This interlude before half time was relieved by a penalty exchange, with Laidlaw coming out on top 2-1 and the half time score coming out at 25-10 in favour of Edinburgh.

The first ten minutes of the second half was a bit of a kicking fest as both teams tried to gain the upper hand. The period ended with a penalty award to Edinburgh which Laidlaw duly saw over, followed by another two minutes later to give the hosts a fine 31-10 lead. A lead which the Dragon's took on as a target rather than a game-ender. For the next 15 minutes, the visitors dominated the match. Firstly, following a series of rucks in the Edinburgh five metre area, Dan Lydiate dived through a gap in the defence for their second try and a rare incursion by Edinburgh saw Nic de Luca throw a 'pass' to Tom Prydie in the Dragon's 22 and, with nobody in the way, the young Welshman galloped the length of the field to score under the posts. Both kicks went over and the score was, a much more worrying, 31-24.

However, with 15 minutes left, Edinburgh managed to keep the Dragon's out using some creative kicking and pressure from the forwards and ended the season on a high with the win and retaining 10th place in the table.

So, what's next for the Capital's rugby team? With seven departures due to injury, retirement or pastures new, the

interim management team have made a few decent signings, the most notable capture being Nikki Walker from Worcester. It can only be hoped that another season like the one just past can be avoided and Edinburgh can return to winning ways and bring a bit of pride – and bigger crowds – back to Murrayfield.

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