



# Rugby – Currie v Heriots

*Bottom of the Premiership table, Currie, lose another two players to serious injury as Heriots win the cross-Edinburgh Derby at Maleny Park.* 

The second Edinburgh Derby in the RBS Premiership in two weeks was played yesterday as Heriots made the trip out to Balerno to play Currie in the fifth round of the 2013-14 season. Currie have had a fair few injury worries so far and are currently languishing at the foot of the premiership table with just two points from five games.

However, it was Currie who were first on the scoreboard, with a penalty from their stand-off, George Horne, to take a 3-0 lead. Heriots then had a chance a few minutes later with a penalty of their own, but the kick from Graham Wilson slid wide in the strong breeze. He did get another chance, as from the 22 drop-out, Heriots took the ball straight back and, following a scrum in front of the posts, Stuart Mustard drove over the line for Heriots' opener. Wilson scored with the kick and Heriots were in a 7-3 lead after 15 or so minutes of play. For the majority of the half, both teams made significant breaks, but a combination of solid defence and a few errors kept the play away from threatening either try line. Currie, in spite of losing Isaac Miller to a yellow, came out ahead 12-7 with a fourth successful penalty kick with just a few minutes of the half left. Collecting the ball from their own restart following Currie's fourth penalty, the ball eventually made it's way out to Heriots' wing, Harry Boisseau, who crashed through the opposing tacklers to score Heriots' second try in the left-hand corner. Wilson then slotted home the difficult kick to take Heriots into half time 14-12 ahead.

After what felt like an extraordinary long break, which the Currie management felt warranted a discussion with the match officials, Currie started the second half as they had the

first, but an early penalty kick was missed. This gave Heriots the chance to get the ball into 'enemy' territory, and they held the home side deep in their half for a several minutes. Play again, swung back and forth, with both sides having breaks, neither gaining the upper hand. Then, with less than fifteen minutes played, the first of Currie's injury woes struck as No. 7, Malcolm Peacock, suffered a heavy landing from a line-out lift and was side-lined, and eventually hospitalised, with a suspected broken/dislocated ankle. This injury disrupted Currie's play and the visitors soon struck with another try. Following the delay, Heriots went on the offensive and their front row and centres combined to drive deep into the home 22. This left the ball in the hands of No. 1, Craig Owenson. With just five metres to the line, nobody was going to stop the loose-head from scoring. And nobody did as he took two Currie players with him on his way over the line (pictured top). Wilson hit the post with the conversion, so Heriots only took a 19-12 lead. 

From this point, Heriots dominated possession and position, holding Currie deep and allowing them only occasional sight of the ball. With just ten minutes or so of play left, Currie suffered their second, and far more serious injury, of the match. A collision between players left Heriots' Jason Hill and Currie's Michael Vernal on the ground. Hill's injury seemed to be confined to his leg, which he soon recovered from, but Vernal was left unconscious on the pitch while medical staff from both sides attended, what appeared to be, a very serious head or spinal injury. After several minutes, during which an ambulance was called for, the referee decided that the match could not continue as the player could not be moved or treated sufficiently by the team present. He, therefore, moved the match to Currie's second pitch, while the player was seen to by a team of Paramedics which had arrived on scene

The match continued from the equivalent point with a scrum,

but it took Heriots only a couple of minutes to add to their tally with another front-row try, this one from hooker, Kevin Bryce. Wilson banged the ball over to take the visitors out to a 26-12 lead. Currie weren't for lying down, however, and took the game back up the field to Heriots' 22. They were held out by some fierce defensive work from the visitors, but persistence won the day and Ethan Pollock dived over near the posts for Currie's only try of the match. With the kick from Horne going over, the score was a much more respectable 26-19. Heriots followed this up with a score of their own, from a Wilson penalty – 29-19 – before it was their turn to lose a player to yellow, as try scorer Bryce was sent to the bin with just over five minutes of the match remaining. Currie were eager for a score to gain a losing bonus point, but another Heriots' penalty on the stroke of full time, gave the visitors a well deserved 32-19 victory and, as the crowd dispersed after the whistle, an ambulance arrived to take the stricken Vernal to hospital for assessment.

In a match which got bogged down a good few times by loose play, mistakes and infringements, Heriots always looked the better of the two sides. Currie gave them a fright on a couple of occasions, but the loss of another two of their players to, possibly, season ending injuries had them on the back foot and scrabbling for possession at times. However, given the potential seriousness of the injury to Michael Vernal, the result of the match is really of secondary importance and hopefully, we'll be able to report good news in that respect.

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