

Rugby – Edinburgh v Perpignan, Round 5 – Heineken Cup

Edinburgh move into second place in their HC pool after a fine win against Perpignan



With two wins and two losses in their Pool, it was imperative that Edinburgh won the Round 5 match against Perpignan at Murrayfield on Saturday night. And it would appear that the 'Solomon's Touch' is beginning to come to fruition as the home side took the win to boost them up to second in the table.

It was a fine start for the Edinburgh side as they took the match to the visitors and had several early incursions into the opposition's 22. One promising attack failed to produce when Nick De Luca dropped the pass with an almost clear run in. However, pressure told and Greg Laidlaw opened the scoring with a successful penalty on the 11 minute mark to put the hosts 3-0 up. With Perpignan seemingly unable to make much headway against the Edinburgh defence, another blast upfield put Tom Brown through the defence to dive over for the opening try of the match. With Laidlaw's kick successful, the score was now up to 10-0.

However, the bane of all coaches, the 'post score sit-back' clicked in and a penalty was given away almost from the restart, which allowed James Hook to get Perpignan on the scoreboard. A couple of minutes later, with their tails now up, the French side set up a few metres out from the Edinburgh line and drove their maul up to, and over the line. With the ball buried in the mass of bodies, referee, Peter Fitzgibbon, was forced to call on the TMO. However, he couldn't see the

ball from any of the many angles considered, therefore was unable to award the try, so the match restarted with a 5-metre scrum. Edinburgh more than held their own and forced the visitors to go infield, but strong defence and powerful tackling kept them at bay, but gave away another penalty. Perpignan went for the line, but getting nowhere against the host's defence, the subsequent penalty award was aimed at the sticks. Hook scored the kick and the score was 10-6 to Edinburgh. Then, just before the end of the half, Laidlaw sank another penalty for the home side to go into the break 13-6 ahead.



Three minutes into the second half saw Perpignan with the chance to get another three points closer, after a controversial breakdown foul for holding on, which Hook took care of to make the score 13-9. Less than a minute later, the visitors' No. 2, Guilhem Guirado was yellow-carded close their line. From the lineout win, the ball went infield and a couple of surges by David Denton and Grant Gilchrist pulled the away defence in. Quick ball from Laidlaw eventually found Cornel Du Preez, who barged his way through a couple of tackles to score Edinburgh's second try. With Laidlaw's kick sailing over, the gap had increased to 11 points at 20-9.

With Guirado still off the field, Edinburgh went on the offensive and an attack down the left lead to the third try. Replacement full back and 'new boy', Carl Bezuidenhout, earned his place with a perfectly weighted grubber kick through the visitors' defence for Dougie Fife to run onto. As the defence fumbled, Fife picked up the ball and stumbled over the line to touch down just over. With the officials unsighted the TMO was consulted once more, but gave the thumbs up to the score this time. 25-9, which then went to 27-9 following another successful Laidlaw conversion.

For the next 15 minutes, or so, the game see-sawed back and

forth, with Edinburgh having the majority of the game, but not making much headway. Headway was made, however, for Perpignan in the 73rd minute. In an almost carbon-copy of the move that lost them the game to Glasgow, a missed tackle allowed the visitors to get outside the defence and have a reasonably easy run in for the score. The TMO was, again, consulted, but a quick glance saw no problem and the try was awarded. Hook converted with a fantastic kick from the touch line which sailed through to bring the score to 27-16.



Try as they might, Edinburgh couldn't score a bonus point try in the last few minutes so the final score stood which put the Edinburgh side up to second place in their pool – Munster having defeated Gloucester – and a more than reasonable chance of qualifying for the next round. And who would have said that at the beginning of the season?

Images from the match will appear [here](#) over the next few days