

Rugby – Edinburgh Rugby v Neath-Swansea Ospreys, Guinness PRO 12

Edinburgh Crumble to Thumping Defeat in Wales



By Stephen Brunsdon (*Images by John Preece from 2013-14 season at Meggetland*)

Edinburgh's away record in the Pro 12 slumped to a new low on Sunday as they were beaten heavily by the Ospreys at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea. Comprehensively outperformed in attack, set piece, defence and execution, the visitors were missing in all aspects as the Welsh side won convincingly 62-13.

Positive showings in the opening two weekends for the capital side gave coach Alan Solomons confidence during the week but were embarrassed by a slick Ospreys side who notched up their third victory in as many weeks to go top of the Guinness Pro 12 standings.

The misery started in the very first minute with scrum half Rhys Webb streaking in from forty metres out to go underneath the posts. Fly half Dan Biggar converted to put the home side 7-0 up. Webb fired another shot into the wound of the visitors with a sniping try from close range ten minutes later. They got a third try before half time as well, this one a demonstration of the dominance of the Welsh. A rolling maul which started from 20 metres out sped up with every metre and eventually Dan Baker charged over the line to score.



The only positive aspect of Edinburgh's game was perhaps that they managed to at least score some points. A Tom Heathcote penalty and a brilliantly taken Hamish Watson try before the half time whistle was scant consolation for the visitors who now languish in their customary lower echelons of the Guinness Pro12 standings. Wing Tim Visser latched onto a box kick from Sam Hildalgo Clyne and volleyed forward. Catching his own kick he was dragged down short of the line but managed to beautifully feed Watson off the ground and the flanker sped into the corner.

However, there was only one team present and one team who was going to win. Despite a yellow card for Justin Tipuric in the second half, the Ospreys went on to score six more tries; including three in the final eleven minutes. A series of embarrassing handling errors from Edinburgh and highly questionable defence allowed the home side to romp clear. Despite some Edinburgh pressure in the Ospreys half, Watson dropped a simple pass which allowed winger Jeff Hassler to streak up the touch line. The Canadian showed great pace and despite Phil Burleigh's efforts, Hassler went in at the corner for the host's sixth try.

Jonathan Spratt added a seventh while Tipuric was in the Sin Bin from close range to extend the lead. Edinburgh now at a complete loss struggled to construct two phases without committing errors. The Ospreys were back up in Edinburgh territory again and Hanno Dirkson ensured they would finish the weekend on top of the Guinness Pro12 standings with another try.

Now with a comfortable lead and bonus point in the bag, the Ospreys looked to open the game up even more, running from deep whenever possible. But alas, it was another Edinburgh mistake that led to the eighth try; Phil Burleigh's erratic offload that should have found Ollie Atkins, found only Tom Graham who coasted under the posts. The Welsh would score once more three minutes from time through Tyler Ardron's

powerful fend on Watson to end a miserable day for the visitors. 62-13 the match finished with almost no positives to take for Edinburgh, except the 13 points. Ospreys on the other hand are in a rich vein of form, having scored 16 tries in their opening three encounters. They play Munster at Thomond Park, Limerick next weekend, while Edinburgh receive the Scarlets at BT Murrayfield on Friday.

Result

Ospreys 62 (24)

Tries – Webb (2), Baker, Biggar, Hassler, Spratt, Dirkson, Grabham, Ardron

Conversions – Biggar (4), S Davies (2)

Penalties – Biggar

Edinburgh 13 (10)

Try – Watson

Conversion – Heathcote

Penalties – Heathcote (2)