

Rugby – Edinburgh v Scarlets, Guinness PR012

Edinburgh Sneak Late Draw with Scarlets



Report by Stephen Brunsdon, images by John Preece.

Edinburgh managed to salvage a draw with Llanelli Scarlets at BT Murrayfield on Friday night, but should have won – had it not been for Tom Heathcote's overtime penalty miss. The home side recovered from an opening minute try and two yellow cards to deny the Welsh side victory; the match ending up a 20-20 draw.

The home side – who had not beaten the Scarlets since 2012 – started in much the same fashion as last week's horror show against the Ospreys. A botched clearance kick found Welsh fly half Rhys Priestland's hands and the ball was swept to full back Lee Williams. Williams then chipped forward; the Edinburgh defence under minimal pressure panicked and Heathcote's slip paved the way for winger Harry Robinson to touch down after a mere forty six seconds.

Much to the Edinburgh local's dismay; the home side took an age to enter the game for real. Possession was scarce and when they did have some, basic handling errors dogged them for large parts of the game.

☒ The Scarlets, confident in attack looked dangerous and after spending a sustained period in the opposition half, extended their lead after twelve minutes. And they were back on the Edinburgh in no time, but staunch Scottish defence ensured the visitors were not able to find a way over the line. Edinburgh won themselves a penalty to relieve the pressure temporarily. But despite this momentary escape, the

Scarlets would not be denied and scored their second try through Lee Williams. The full back brilliantly sidestepped back three duo of Greig Tonks and Jack Cuthbert to scamper in the corner. Priestland converted to extend the lead to 17-3.

Edinburgh bounced back shortly the half time whistle however. Sustained attack in the Welsh 22 resulted in a series of penalties for the home side. Through a powerful front five, Edinburgh battered away at the Welsh line, initially unable to find a gap in the red wall. The hard efforts paid off as Heathcote spread the ball wide through the backs, and centre Sam Beard's beautifully weighted pass found Visser who ran in unopposed in the corner. Heathcote converted from the touchline to ensure the hosts went in at the break just seven points behind.

While Priestland missed an opportunity to extend the lead prior to the break, he was able to rectify this shortly after. Once more the Scarlets looked much more settled and potent in attack and pressured the Edinburgh line. The Edinburgh defence, to their credit proved as solid as that in the first forty minutes but a cynical slap down of the ball by prop John Andress ensured a second yellow card for the hosts. Priestland, successful with the shot at goal extended the Scarlets' lead to 20-10.

Basic skills lacked the home side at various stages throughout the match; a trait which must have infuriated coach Alan Solomons. Early engagements in the scum, malfunctioning lineouts and countless knock ons were thankfully ironed out as the game wore on and Heathcote bagged a penalty in the 50th minute. The deficit now reduced to just the converted try. ❌

While it seemed improbable that Edinburgh could cross the line for a second time, the hosts' were dealt a good card when the Scarlets' play became scrappy and ill disciplined. Despite significantly more possession for the visitors, they conceded

more and more penalties. In the final ten minutes, Scotland flanker John Barclay was sent to the Sin Bin. And just like that Edinburgh were reinvigorated and snatched the advantage immediately. Within a minute of Barclay's yellow card, Edinburgh kicked a penalty to touch and attempted to maul towards the Welsh line. Quick ball then followed and Kiwi centre Phil Burleigh crashed over to score a vital try. Heathcote then converted to equalise the encounter at 20-20.

The sparse home crowd found their voices in the remaining five minutes. The Scarlets continued to be overwhelmed in the scrum as Edinburgh dominated the set piece. And they won a final penalty and a final chance to steal an unlikely victory. But alas, Heathcote was unable to convert from the halfway line; his kick falling short, Priestland kicked out to secure the Scarlets' second draw of the Guinness Pro 12 and ensure Edinburgh put to an end a two match losing run.

Edinburgh coach Solomons said post match: "One of the big things today, was for us to show our composure". Quite so, a much improved performance from a vastly changed Edinburgh side will at least give them confidence going into next weekend's trip to Ulster. The Scarlets meanwhile return to Parc y Scarlets to face Newport Gwent Dragons.

Result

Edinburgh 20 (10)

Tries – Visser, Burleigh

Conversions – Heathcote (2)

Penalties – Heathcote (2)

Scarlets 20 (17)

Tries – Robinson, L. Williams

Conversions – Priestland 2

Penalties – Priestland 2

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