

Rugby – Ulster v Edinburgh, Guinness PRO12

Edinburgh Endure Yet More Pain in Ulster

✘ *Report by Stephen Brunsdon. Images by John Preece from 2013-14 Season*

Edinburgh slumped to another dismal defeat in this year's Guinness Pro 12 season after a 30-0 defeat at the hands of Ulster at the Kingspan in Belfast last night. The hosts in turn, recorded their third victory of the season in a bonus point performance which rarely saw the visitors play any part. Edinburgh were present merely in numbers as Alan Solomons' side failed to reproduce the sort of performance that rewarded them with a draw with the Scarlets last weekend.

Ulster began the match well, winning the early set piece battles and developing a tight grip on the scrum. Edinburgh twice gave away scrum penalties, in a marked contrast to last weekend where their set piece proved dominant. And it would be from a scrum that the first points would come; prop John Andress penalised and Ulster fly-half Paddy Jackson slotting the resulting penalty.

Some four minutes later, Edinburgh won a penalty which Jack Cuthbert failed to convert. This was the first of two points scoring chances the visitors had but with each chance there was no reward. Ulster struck after seventeen minutes through a break from centre Stuart McCloskey. The youngster escaped several would-be Edinburgh tacklers before feeding Andrew Trimble who went sprinting under the posts. Jackson converted to make the score 10-0.

Jackson added another three points a minute before half time to take a 13-0 lead into the break. Things looked bleak for an

uninspired Edinburgh squad desperately searching for answers. And in all honesty, things would not get better. Ulster dominated possession and territory throughout and squeezed Edinburgh into submission. Edinburgh would get over the line briefly, only for the ball and Roddy Grant to be held up by solid Ulster defence after fifty minutes. That would be the closest Edinburgh got to scoring anything all night.

While the game never seemed to be within Edinburgh's reach, it soon slipped completely out of it after captain Mike Coman was yellow carded after fifty nine minutes for pulling down a rolling Ulster maul just short of the line. It was a killer blow to the visitors as two minutes later, Ulster struck. Eighteen stone number eight Nick Williams barged his way through Sam Hildalgo-Clyne after a pick and go from the ruck. Replacement fly half Stuart Olding missed the conversion but the hosts extended their lead to eighteen points.

It was then that Ulster really put Edinburgh to the sword. Confident with ball in hand and with a man advantage, the penalties kept on coming for the home side. Edinburgh were scrambling in defence but could not hold off a further two tries to complete the whitewash. Hooker Rory Best crashed over for an easy bonus point try after a rolling maul proved unstoppable. Olding converted from in front of the posts.

As the Belfast rain became a downpour, Edinburgh's chances were all but washed away. Despite a range of substitutions, nothing could stop Ulster scooping a fifth try in the final minute. Trimble went in for his second try of the match after a nicely worked set piece move. Scrum half Paul Marshall floated a beautifully weighted pass to the speedy winger to slide in at the corner. Again, Olding was unsuccessful with the conversion, but the score nevertheless extended to an embarrassing 30-0 without the home side having to do too much for their victory.

The clock wound down on another dismal Edinburgh performance

on the road. It was their third defeat in this season's Pro12 and second heavy away loss in a row. Despite the defeat, coach Alan Solomons saw at least some light at the end of an increasingly long tunnel for the capital side: *"We know we're a decent side and there's no reason, if we play well and put in a good performance, that we're not going to get the result next weekend"*

Edinburgh drop to 10th in the Guinness Pro12 while Ulster move up to 3rd, one place behind but level on points with Glasgow Warriors. Edinburgh will need to hope for a return to some sort of form next weekend when they return to BT Murrayfield to face the Dragons.

Result

Ulster 30 (13)

Tries: Trimble (2), Williams, Bes

Conversions: Jackson, Olding

Penalties: Jackson (2)

Edinburgh 0 (0)