

Rugby – Edinburgh v Grenoble, European Rugby Challenge Cup

Edinburgh open their European account with a fine win



Friday night saw Edinburgh play the first match of their 2015-16 European Rugby Challenge Cup campaign. Last season's losing finalists were playing against FC Grenoble Rugby at BT Murrayfield in challenging – to say the least – conditions with an eye on the fact that they had lost their last three games in the PRO12 league.

An early indication of how things were stacking up was the virtual destruction of the Grenoble scrum at the first encounter, giving the hosts a platform to build on for the first score. Seven minutes in and a lineout in the opposition 22 gave Edinburgh an early attacking drive, setting up a maul and heaving the Grenoble pack back over their goal line, Cornell du Preez touching down for the try – although confirmation took a good few minutes and, following Sam Hidalgo-Clyne's wayward attempt at goal, a 5-0 lead.

With the weather taking a turn for the worse the next 20, or so, minutes were mostly played in Grenoble's territory, but the wet ball did nothing to enhance the handling experience for either side. However, the almost complete dominance of the home scrum was beginning to make itself felt and, 29 minutes in, Grenoble flanker, Fabien Alexandre was carded for foul play at the breakdown.

This was Edinburgh's chance to increase the score with the pack coming to the fore and winning a penalty on 33 minutes for Hidalgo-Clyne to slot home for 8-0. He then scored his second following another dominant passage of play just on the half time mark to go into the break 11-0 ahead.

Four minutes into the second half and Hidalgo-Clyne added another three points for 14-0. Grenoble came back at the home side, showing a degree of attacking flair missing from the first half and won a penalty in the Edinburgh 22. Choosing to go to the line, the resultant maul won them penalty advantage which was pulled back when Hidalgo-Clyne was forced to touch down over his own try line to give Grenoble a chance to close the gap.

They went for the kick and scrum half, James Hart, knocked the ball over and put their first points on the board for 14-3. ❌

Edinburgh then put in a fine period of play, initiated by a lone break from Dougie Fife deep into the visitors' half. He was turned over, but Grenoble were now on the defensive and were forced to kick from deep on a number of occasions.

Edinburgh's next score came courtesy of referee, Ben Whitehouse. Winning a scrum five metres from the Grenoble line, Edinburgh's pack set about crushing the opposition and, given little option from the resultant mayhem, Whitehouse marched over the beneath the posts to award the score. Hidalgo-Clyne slotted the conversion home to see the hosts 21-3 ahead with 20 minutes left to play.

Just before the 70 minute mark another Grenoble player, Martino Nemani, was shown yellow for foul play, but his apparent refusal to immediately leave the field saw him 'promoted' to a red – football take note! – and see out the rest of the match from the dugout.

With 70 minutes showing on the four, massive, clocks (I missed seeing them for the first 10 minutes! – JP), Hoyland broke clear and weaved his way upfield. However, his offload from the tackle was fumbled by Fife, giving possession back to the visitors. They cleared, but the ball came straight back via du Preez, but Sean Kennedy's pass from the back of the ruck was juggled and kicked about by his team mates. The ball ended up

in the hands of Grenoble's winger, Daniel Kilioni who went the length of the pitch, chased by Hoyland, to score a try for the visitors, converted by Hart, to take them up to 10 points and a 21-10 score line.



This didn't, fortunately, turn out to be an omen and just before the end of play, Edinburgh were once again on the visitors' try line. A kick through from Tonks was ushered over the sideline by Grenoble, setting up a final minute's attack by Edinburgh. Quick lineout ball, followed by a quick recycle left du Preez with a gap to slot through for his second try of the night – and Man-of-the-Match – to seal the win. Hidalgo-Clyne then took ages over the kick to see the clock over the 80 minutes before kicking the easy conversion and to give Edinburgh a fine campaign- opening 28-10 win.

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

While this was going on in Edinburgh, in Paris a terrorist attack on a variety of social venues lead to the untimely deaths of, at least, 120 people out to enjoy a Friday night on the town. And we were moaning about the weather... Puts it all in perspective, really....