

Rugby – Edinburgh v London Irish, European Rugby Challenge Cup

Edinburgh maintain unbeaten run in Challenge Cup



With the match moved to BT Murrayfield following an unfavourable pitch inspection at Myreside, a lack of the atmosphere generated by the smaller ground might have been thought to have had a marginal effect on the home side, but, despite an early scare, Edinburgh stretched away to record an impressive win over London Irish.

However, it was the visitors who were first with any points as a series of forward drives near the Edinburgh line gave them a penalty which stand off, Tommy Bell, converted for a 3-0 lead.

A few minutes later, the home side won a penalty in London Irish's half which, new man Jaco van der Walt put in the corner. Setting up a rolling maul from the lineout, hooker, Stuart McInally, peeled off the back of the pack and charged across the line for the first of eight tries for Edinburgh. Van der Walt missed the kick, but Edinburgh had their noses in front at 5-3 with seven minutes played.

The following few minutes were fairly uneventful, but Irish made the best of it and kicked a 14th minute penalty into the corner. This set up a series of scrums and subsequent penalties on Edinburgh's five-meter line which the home side were lucky to survive with the loss of only one man – Rory Sutherland – or award against of a penalty try for continual infringements. But, they didn't and the attack eventually came to naught with a free kick against the visitors which relieved the, almost eight minutes, of try line pressure.



Then it was Edinburgh's turn to press home an attack. Gaining territory into the away 22, a passing move from the centre of the pitch gave full back, Blair Kinghorn a bit of space down the right touchline. He chipped a kick over the defender and chased through. Unfortunately, for the Exiles, their 15, Greg Tonks (remember him?) failed to gather and knocked the ball back where Kinghorn, who had followed his kick in, beat the opposition to the ball for the second try. Van der Walt converted this time and it was 12-3 to Edinburgh after around 25 minutes of play.

Still a man down, Edinburgh were holding up until wing, Ben Loader, broke down the line from his own 22, putting in a nice post-tackle kick behind the defence for his fellow wing, Ben Ransom to chase over for the try. Tonks then converted for 12-10 with less than 10 minutes left to play.

A 'less than 10 minutes' period which saw two Phil Burleigh tries for the Edinburgh side.

The first of these was off the back of a powerful drive from flanker Magnus Bradbury, which Burleigh placed down near the posts following an outrageous dummy. His second followed a couple of minutes later after No. 9, Sam Hidalgo-Clyne's grubber kick through, which centre Chris Dean ran on to, before his pass put Burleigh in the clear. Van der Walt converted both tries for a half time score of 26-10.



The second half started, more-or-less, where the first left off, with Edinburgh in the driving seat deep in the opposition half. A couple of darting runs from Damien Hoyland and a slightly more direct approach from Viliame Mata didn't pay off, with London Irish managing to clear, but reward come just after 50 minutes as Hidalgo-Clyne found his way to the line around the outside for the fifth try, converted by van der Walt, for 31-10.

A couple of minutes later, the slightly more spectacular, try No. 6 was chalked up for debuting wing, Darcy Graham. Chasing down a bouncing ball into the corner, he made a diving grab and, while being tackled – in the air – managed to ground the ball before being thrown over the dead ball line for 36-10.

Just as the match was approaching the final quarter, London Irish won a penalty and went for the corner. They then scored their second try of the night from a rolling maul off the top of the line out, Edinburgh's former captain, Mike Coman getting the ball down.

The following 10 minutes saw a few substitutions, but all Tonks saw was yellow for a high tackle and Edinburgh used their man advantage to score their seventh try on 70 minutes, Junior Rasolea taking advantage of a loose ball in the goal area to score. Kinghorn then took over the kicking duties and scored the conversion for 43-15.



With two minutes left, one of the Ben's in the Exiles line-up, Ben Meehan, scored a runaway try, but this was wiped out just into overtime by another kick/chase/Irish fumble/try effort for Edinburgh from Sean Kennedy and, with Kinghorn's successful conversion, the final score was, very impressive, 50-20 to Edinburgh who are now eight points clear of Stade Francais at the top of their group in the ERCC.

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