

Rugby League – Edinburgh Eagles v Catterick Crusaders – NE Rugby League Cup, Semi-final

Eagles score 10 to net Final place.



Catterick Crusaders were the visitors to the Jack Kane Centre on Saturday to face Edinburgh Eagles for a place in the final of the North East Cup but returned home empty handed as Eagles achieved what was ultimately a comfortable victory.

Eagles, playing down the hill first half, kicked off in the cloudy conditions and took the game to Catterick from the whistle but it was Catterick who scored first on three minutes to take an early 6-0 lead.

The home side didn't panic and, from the kick off, Catterick knocked on and a player in an offside position picked up the ball. The resulting penalty saw Eagles immediately go on the attack with the forwards setting the platform for Mikey Mair to score from 20 metres for Eagles first try of the game under the posts on six minutes and with the kick converted by Fergus Simpson, the scores were tied. Unfortunately this was the only action of the game for Mair as he was forced to leave the field with a jaw injury.

Edinburgh were in no mood to lose this game and quickly followed up their first try, with a second on nine minutes from Lucas Reid to give Eagles the lead. Both sides traded sets without managing to score until the 15th minute when Eagles conceded two penalties in quick succession allowing Catterick to advance to the Eagles try line, where they

eventually forced the ball over to take the lead 12-10 after the kick was successfully converted. It was now advantage to Catterick who continued to attack but stout Eagles defence kept them out.



Eventually the hosts began to build some pressure of their own and scored two tries in quick succession. First, debutant Ross Marwick ran the length of the field to touch down on 28 minutes, and then on the half hour, Reid added his second from the resulting kick off, to give Eagles a 20-12 lead at half time following a successful Stuart McBain conversion.

The second half kicked off in warm and sunny conditions and the Catterick cause was not helped when they had a player sent to the sin bin for 10 minutes following a shoulder charge. Eagles immediately capitalised though debutant Joe O'Neil to stretch the lead to 14 points after another successful McBain kick.

The warm conditions were by now taking a toll with handling

mistakes on both sides however Eagles eventually scored again through giant winger Marwick to take the score to 30-12 leaving Catterick needing to score three converted tries to bring the scores level. Catterick didn't give up and reduced the deficit to 12 points following a converted try but time was by now running out and with Eagles able to rotate their full 20 member playing squad, there was always a supply of fresh legs in the forward pack.

Tiredness inevitably took it's toll on Catterick who conceded a further four tries in the final ten minutes. Reid completed his hat trick and was closely followed by last week's hero Jakub Jablonski after he crashed over on the left wing. Second row Nick Hanmer found himself outside and, after he sold an outrageous dummy to the Catterick defender, dived over in the corner, and finally McBain scored following a quick play the ball after Michele Crolla tripped with the line at his mercy, allowing the chasing defenders to complete the tackle. In the final act of the game, McBain duly converted his own try to leave the final score at Edinburgh Eagles 48 – Catterick Crusaders 18.



Coach

Barry McGuffog said after the match; “Firstly, thanks to Jason and the Catterick boys for making the trip up. I thought it was a great game and I think we were in the unusual situation today regarding North East rugby league, in that we were probably slight favourites given our previous results in the competition and Catterick’s current league position. Although I felt we deserved to win comfortably on the balance of play, the score line certainly flattered us a little at the end with the late flurry of tries. Our lads have achieved what we set out to do so now we’ve got two training sessions to work on things for the final. I’d like to wish Catterick all the best for the rest of the season, and I’m sure with more performances like today, they’ll move up the league ahead of the top and bottom split.”

The final against reigning North East RL league champions Wallsend Eagles, takes places at Kingston Park, Newcastle, home of rugby league’s Newcastle Thunder and rugby union’s Newcastle Falcons, on Saturday 7 July. Kick off is 2pm, with

under 14's and 16's finals taking place beforehand.

Places are available on the team bus for anyone wanting to come along and support the team, please [contact the club](#) for details.

Match report courtesy of Eagles' Andrew McPhail.

Images from the match are available to [view here](#)