

American rugby club present donation to Hearts + Balls

An American rugby club came to Edinburgh on the eve of Scotland's Six Nations match against Ireland to present a donation of more than £3,000 to Scottish charity Hearts + Balls. The rugby charity helps the rugby community help its own and had stepped in when American Mike Jones broke his neck while playing rugby in Florida.

Hearts + Balls stepped in with an immediate donation of £1,000 to help Mike who was paralysed by the injury.

The Albany Knickerbockers decided they wanted to help the charity which had helped their teammate. They started out trying to raise \$2,500 and exceeded that to present the donation by hand.



Jonesy's Front Row at BT Murrayfield

The fundraising team are known as 'Jonesy's Front Row' and on their behalf Dave Farison said: "The contribution from Hearts + Balls was vital during a critical time for Mike and it enabled him to transition from Florida to New Jersey to be with his family.

"The generous donation, which was given with nothing but love and support, was all the more incredible as it was from a charity based on the other side of the world. It shows the incredible reach and generosity of the rugby community.

"It's a true honour to make this trip. I only wish Mike could have joined us. "

The donation will help rugby players and their families in times need. The charity provides support in the form of property conversions, equipment, travel costs, respite care, legal costs and counselling.

Hearts + Balls board member, and former Scotland captain, Al Kellock, was on hand to accept the cheque on behalf of the charity.

He said: "While our charity was set-up with a mission to help Scottish rugby players who need our support, sometimes, there are cases which simply can't be ignored.

"The fact that Mike's friends have pulled together to do their bit and give back so we can help even more people is yet another example of the incredible community involved in the game that we all love.

"I was honoured to welcome them to BT Murrayfield and thank them for their incredible contribution. All our thoughts are with Mike. Hopefully, one day, we'll have the opportunity to show him that Scottish hospitality is second to none!"

To find out more about how you can support Hearts + Balls, visit www.heartsandballs.org.uk.