Rugby League — Edinburgh Eagles v Strathmore Silverbacks, Scottish RL Cup Final

The Scottish Cup competition returned in 2019 following a five year sabbatical. The final, played on Saturday 20th July at Lochinch Sports Pavilion in Glasgow, saw Edinburgh Eagles face Strathmore Silverbacks in what has become a "derby" of sorts in the last few years.

The open-age clash, played in temperatures approaching 22 degrees, was preceded by an under 16's game between the two clubs in match two of the three scheduled. As with the first, the Eagles took the spoils but the margin victory was far less due to a much improved Silverbacks performance with Edinburgh winning 34-24.

Strathmore scored early on, perhaps against expectations…

In the main event, it could've been argued than Edinburgh Eagles would start as slight favourites due to the regularity of their fixtures in the North East of England league competition, but it was Strathmore who started the brighter of the two sides and opened the scoring when Andrew Burgess intercepted a pass from Eagles' Lewis Clarke to race in from forty metres. The same player added the extras to make it 6-0.

The capital-based Eagles were their own worst enemies at times and a series of handling errors and penalties gifted the Silverbacks both possession and field position.

…and applied pressure on for the whole of the first half

Marshalled by experienced halfback Fraser McKay, the Silverbacks took the ball close to the Edinburgh line before Glenn Feighan crashed over off a Stuart Gray short-ball. Burgess was again successful with the conversion, as he was for a third time when converting Niall Hall's close range try, giving the Forfar outfit an unexpected, yet fully deserved, 18-0 lead.

This seemed to be the shock to the system that The Eagles needed and they finally settled in to the game. A series of exchanged errors or completed sets ensued and Edinburgh finally managed to get themselves on the score board shortly before halftime, when prop Terry Logan took a Gareth Walker pass and powered his way over the line. The conversion was missed which meant the Strathmore Silverbacks were leading 18-4 at the break.

Big tackles were the order of the day

Whatever Edinburgh Eagles player-coach Craig Robertson and captain Lewis Clarke said to their team must've worked as this became the old clichée of "a game of two halves" in the second forty.

First on the scoresheet following the restart was Clarke who barged over following some good footwork. Mikey Mair converted to make it 18-10 in favour of the Silverbacks but the fight back had begun.

Over the next twenty minutes there seemed little the Strathmore defence could do to stop the Edinburgh juggernaut. It was an off day with boot for the Eagles but tries Gareth Walker, Lennox Baselala, Robertson and Clarke with his second of the game, put them 26-18 up with only nine minutes to play.

Strong Silverbacks defence meant the Eagles had to power over the line to score

The heat and physicality of the game was starting take its toll on both teams but like boxers entering the final round of a title bout, neither wanted to throw in the towel and when Strathmore's Burgess swooped on a loose Edinburgh pass to score with seven minutes to go, it was game on once again.

Credit must go to both teams as they gave their all in the final minutes and it's only fair to say that every player can come of the field with their head held high, irrespective of the result. The game was however decided with the last play of the game when powerhouse Logan forced his way over for the Eagles to secure a 30-22 victory and see Edinburgh Eagles crowned Scottish Cup winners 2019.

The Eagles celebrate their win
Match report courtesy of [Eagles](#) Barry McGuffog and [Scotland Rugby League](#)

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