

Rugby – Edinburgh Rugby v DHL Stormers, United Rugby Championship

For Round 3 of the inaugural United Rugby Championship, South African Side, DHL Stormers were the visitors to Edinburgh Rugby's DAM Health Stadium on Saturday evening. With both sides coming off the back of losses in the previous round, there was a lot to play for.

And playing was certainly on the cards as the home side were two converted tries up inside the first six minutes.

Try 1 was scored with just two-and-a-bit minutes played as Edinburgh pinned the visitors in their own 22 from the kick off return. The pack were straight on the job, recycling the ball and driving forward.

A couple of plays had the away defence strung out a touch and Edinburgh's star find at scrum half, Ben Vellacott, was keeping things alive. The try came from a Jaco van der Walt offload when the No. 10 stepped inside, drawing two defenders, before popping his pass Darcy Graham.



Warrick Gellant launches himself at the line for the Stormers opening score © 2021 J.L. Preece

The winger – playing down the middle – saw the yawning gap open up in front and had an easy trot in under the posts. van der Walt then converted for 7-0 after three minutes.

With their tales up and the crowd baying for more, more was delivered and, a couple of minutes later, it was 14-0 following Try 2.

This was, basically a repeat of the first try's build-up, but the finisher on this occasion was Vellacott. He was a bit further out, and received a bit more attention from the defence than Graham, but he slipped the tackle and, like his team mate, found himself with a clear run in under the posts.

Another, simple, van der Walt conversion then brought the score up to 14-0 with just over six minutes played.

With the Stormers looking a bit bewildered by it all, the home side were revelling in the noise from the stands.

But only for a couple of minutes...



Both defences were on top of affairs © 2021 J.L. Preece
Gathering the restart return, the Stormers used their big forwards to blast through the home side defence and quickly gain a foothold in the hosts' 22. Once their back division got their hands on the ball, it was swung wide, spreading the defence, before coming back inside.

It was the final swing of direction that lead to their try. A couple of big players up the middle drew in the defence on the five-metre line before the ball was slipped to centre, Warrick Gelant, who crashed over from close in for the score.

With the conversion from Tim Swiel splitting the uprights it was 14-7 with 10 minutes on the clock.

It was now the visitors who had their tales up and, not without support in the nearly 6,000 crowd, they repulsed another home drive and won a penalty in the process. Swiel slotted the kick home and, on 15 minutes, it was 14-10.

At this point the game began to open up a bit as both sides

held and lost possession, with play swinging from 22 to 22. Edinburgh were the first to blink, but a cross-kick out to their wing saw the ball fumbled into touch.

As the visitors were on advantage, they took the kick to touch for the penalty, but again the home defence held out.



Oops! Foot in touch for Graham © 2021 J.L. Preece

The next points came by way of van der Walt's boot as he converted a penalty from just outside the South African 22 for 17-10 after 28 minutes.

The Stormers then came roaring back again and pinned Edinburgh deep in their own half. A couple of errors gave the ball back to the home side but they were struggling to get clear and make any ground.

The visitors' second try came down the middle again. And, again, the pack were heavily involved. Their No. 8, Evan Roos battled his way through to the 5 metre-line before slipping the ball to the, ever present, Paul de Wet who finished off in style near the posts for 17-15. Tim Swiel, once again converted for 17-17 with just over five minutes left to play.

An exchange of penalties from van der Walt and Swiel in the run down to the break saw the teams go in at 20-20.

Given the action in the first half, the crowd must have been rubbing their hands at the prospect of repeat in the second half.

But it wasn't to be...



Bill Mata is a huge weapon in attack for Edinburgh © 2021 J.L. Preece

The second period was mostly played between the 22's, with both sides making occasional forays into the danger zone, possibly for nostalgia's sake, but neither side really

threatened the line.

Graham was released for a couple of breaks, but he stepped into touch on one and missed the ball on the other. For his part, Man-of-the-Match, van der Walt had a go at the posts, but the ball fell, agonisingly, short.

The game finished with the Stormers on the attack, but getting nowhere and, eventually they lost the ball and van der Walt decided that enough was enough and booted the ball into touch, leaving the match result at 20 points apiece.

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