

Rugby – Edinburgh v Benetton, United Rugby Championship

Round 7 of the United Rugby Championship saw Benetton returning to the DAM Health Stadium to play an Edinburgh side looking to continue their current winning streak in the league. Benetton, for their part, were hoping to avenge the heavy, pre-season friendly defeat they suffered back in September.

Before the match started both teams and supporters paid a minute's tribute to Stirling County and Scotland Women's International player, Siobhan Cattigan, who sadly passed away earlier in the week at the, tragically, young age of 26. Our thoughts go out to her friends and family at this time.

The match got underway at lightning pace as both sides tried to go on the offensive early on. Benetton, however, came away from the first period ahead, when a penalty just outside Edinburgh's 22 was knocked over by No. 10, Leonardo Marin, for a 0-3 lead after eight minutes.



The visitors applied some early pressure to the hosts' defence
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The home side then regained possession after the restart from a Benetton handling error, but, despite, pressing the defence, they eventually lost the ball and the visitors cleared.

The first try of the match came a few minutes later following an attack up the centre involving both backs and forwards – Hamish Watson making a huge contribution on his DAM Health Stadium debut – which broke down in the 22 when the visitors' scrum-half and captain, Dewaldt Duvenage, was deemed to have deliberately knocked the ball forward.



Edinburgh's forwards showing their handling skills early on. © 2021 J.L. Preece

He was 'awarded' a yellow and Edinburgh's penalty award went to the touch line.

With the ball secured, it was passed quickly through the hands of Ben Vellacott and Blair Kinghorn and out to Darcy Graham, giving the winger an easy trot in for the try. Kinghorn missed the conversion, but the hosts were 5-3 ahead with about 14 minutes on the clock.

Capitalising on the one-man advantage, Edinburgh launched themselves at the Italian defence who, to give them full credit, held out until the 22nd minute.



Superb awareness from Blair Kinghorn lead to the first try © 2021 J.L. Preece

Another break up the centre by Kinghorn was dragged down just inside the 22, but the ever-alert stand-off got the ball away to the ever-present Graham. The winger then proceeded to burrow through a wall of forwards, bouncing off tackles and, somehow, emerging from the pile up with the ball.

The resultant melee left clear space down Edinburgh's left flank and a couple of long passes left No. 15, Emiliano Boffelli with a clear run in for, after another missed conversion, 10-3.

With Duvenage back on and the sides equal again, the remainder of the half was reduced to a mid-field struggle and, with

neither side being able to dominate, 10-3 was the score at the break.



Kinghorn scored Edinburgh's third try just after the break © 2021 J.L. Preece

Not for too long, though, as in the 46th minute a huge passing handling error was pounced upon by Kinghorn who dived on the loose ball in the goal area to score the home side's third, albeit TMO adjudicated, try for 15-3. He then converted for 17-3 and a try short of a bonus point.

Benetton were not for lying down however and proceeded to pile on the pressure. The Edinburgh defence held their own but could not find a way clear, turning the ball over to their opponents on several occasions.

Eventually, the immense pressure told and, in the 60th minute, the visitors' pack rucked their way across the line for their try and 17-8. The simple conversion was kicked by Marin leaving Benetton one score behind at 17-10.



Benetton's forwards eventually broke through the home defence © 2021 J.L. Preece

With a flurry of substitutions on for both sides by now, the match bogged down a bit until just before the 70th minute when the Edinburgh pack mauled their way across the line for 22-10, which Kinghorn's conversion took out to 24-10.

And that was the stand-off's last contribution as he was taken off a couple of minutes later after being knocked unconscious during a ruck situation.

However, Edinburgh saw out the, seemingly never-ending – and not just down to the number of stoppages – match for the 24-10, bonus-point, win which put them second, at that time, in their conference, just a point behind Leinster.

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