

Rugby League – Edinburgh Eagles v York Acorn, Betfred Challenge Cup, Rd. 1

Edinburgh Eagles welcomed York Acorn, who play in the top amateur division in England, to Royal High School on Saturday for the first round of the 2022 Betfred Challenge Cup competition which will climax in the final at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium in May.

With their first set of possession, York engineered a three-man overlap on the right-hand side to run in a straightforward try. Then, when they next had the ball, some accurate passing and determined running produced a second try near the Eagles' posts.



Edinburgh Eagles v York Acorn, Betfred Challenge Cup, RHS Barnton, Edinburgh, 15th Jan 2022 © 2022 J.L. Preece

With 5 minutes gone and a 10 – 0 lead, York had shown a clear advantage in the speed of their play-the-balls and the ease with which their confident passing was stretching the Eagles' defence however, Eagles did not capitulate and indeed, for the remainder of the first half, the play was much more evenly balanced.

A neat grubber kick by half-back Alex Williams led to confusion in the York rearguard led to a try for Roserutabua Tawanayavulala, and it was only just before the interval that York scored again to give themselves some breathing space although the Eagles cause was helped when York had a try disallowed just before half time for a contentious knock-on meaning York only led by 16-6 at half time.



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At the start of the 2nd half it was the turn of the Eagles to make a strong start as, firstly, a sweeping move involving 5 or 6 players finished by a long run from Orisi Waibuta over a combined distance of about 80 yards to score a brilliant try – which one watching spectator described as one that won't be bettered in this year's competition – then Mikey Mair scored to give Eagles an 18-16 lead and an upset was on the cards.

Undoubtedly, York were rattled and perplexed after their flying start to the game however they had the experience to re-group to come back at the Eagles. With their bustling prop forward Adam Endersby leading the way, they manoeuvred themselves into position to score a couple of short range tries against a tiring defence, aided by the Eagles conceding repeat sets of possession following needless penalties.



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This time, as the daylight faded, the lead that York Acorn built up was not to be overturned as they came away with a victory by 38 – 24, with Eagles Keni Dakuidreketi scoring the last of their 4 tries on the day near the end of the match as a consolation.

York's reward for the victory is a home tie in the second round against the London-based Wests Warriors whilst Eagles will now prepare for this summer's domestic season.



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Edinburgh Eagles: 24 (Tries: Tawanayavulala, Waibuta, Mair, Dakuidreketi. Goals: Williams (4))

York Acorn: 38 (Tries: Aquino, Robson, Speck, Garrington, Parker, Brown, Arthur. Goals: Chilton (5))

Match report courtesy of Edinburgh Eagles

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