

Rugby – Edinburgh v Castres, Heineken Champions Cup

Edinburgh welcomed French side, Castres Olympique, to a DAM Health Stadium holding its first ever Heineken Champions Cup match. The ground staff, for their part, had worked wonders getting the pitch into a playable condition after the adverse weather seen in the Capital over the previous week

The first 20 minutes of the game were fairly even with both sides exerting pressure, although Edinburgh lost two key players to injury in this period.



Edinburgh Rugby v Castres Olympique, Heineken Champions Cup, DAM Health Stadium, Edinburgh, 17th Dec 2022

Score – Edinburgh 31, Castres 20

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First out of the game was Stuart McInally in the first few minutes, who failed his HIA assessment, after suffering a head knock in a tackle. Blair Kinghorn then followed not long after when he suffered some muscular spasms in his back.

The opening try came the way of the home side following sustained pressure on the French defence.

Taking a tap-and-go penalty under the posts, Edinburgh's Pierre Schoeman, popped the ball up and No. 8, Bill Mata, ran onto the short pass and blasted over the line for the try. Emiliano Boffelli then converting for 7-0.



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Castres hit back almost straight away when a loose ball from a lineout a few metres out from the home try line was collected by Pierre Colonna who waltzed through a huge gap in the defence to go over in the corner for 7-5.

Less than five minutes later it was 7-12 when Castres' Julien Blanc scored in the opposite corner from a break down the right. Getting the ball across the pitch ahead of the defensive cover, left the wing with a, relatively, easy sprint in for the try.

As the break approached, Edinburgh were gaining the upper hand and 'forcing' the opposition to give away penalties. Eventually, the count got too high for the referee and the hosts' pack were awarded a penalty try for 14-12 when Castres were, again, penalised close to their line.



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However, they pulled back three with a penalty from Julien Dumora on the stroke of half time for 14-13

Seven minutes into the second half, with the home side still in the driving seat, a well-worked passing move put Edinburgh's Charlie Savala through an enormous hole in the defence for the home side's third try. Boffelli then converted for 21-13.

With 15 minutes to go, it was Ben Vellacott's turn to score when the scrum half followed up a James Lang kick through and took advantage of a Castres mistake with the bouncing ball to ground. Boffelli then converted for 28-13.



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Once again, Castres struck back almost immediately with a simple try near the posts from Adrien Seguret, just reward from a period of extended pressure on the Edinburgh line. Stand off Ben Bodica then converted for 28-20.

A late Boffelli penalty then sealed the deal for Edinburgh who ran out, bonus-point, winners 31-20.