

Sharks steal victory from a dominant Edinburgh

Edinburgh 17 Sharks 18

A heartbreaking result for Edinburgh with almost everything having gone their way but the scoreline. This was not all Sharks doing, however, as Edinburgh had several wasted chances. It came down to accuracy and even with their lack of, the Sharks converted when it mattered the most.

Edinburgh went in at halftime after an incredibly strong performance. Their physicality on both sides of the ball and intent in attack caught the Sharks slightly off-guard. This effect was enhanced by Sharks fullback Aphelele Fassi who made multiple kicking errors in key parts of the field. The question on everyone's mind at halftime was if Edinburgh would be able to keep this pace up.

That question was answered as Edinburgh showed no signs of slowing down with throughout the half. The game had the crowd on their feet and roaring, the buzz was one of an intensity not often seen at the Hive.

The Sharks scored the first points of the encounter as they went to the boot of Jaden Hendrikse after a penalty.

The South African attempted the same feat but from even further back, which, this time did not go in his favour as he put wide of the posts. It was clear early on that the Sharks were not taking any chances.

A multitude of mistakes came from both sides within the first ten minutes.

Edinburgh replied with an excellent finish from Lang following

a good set of phases that really put the Sharks defence under pressure.

Everitt's side showed some incredible handling with James Lang being heavily involved again to nearly set up McCann in the corner – Thompson failed to add the extras.

Edinburgh were sending a clear message that they had no intentions of rolling over to this star-studded Sharks' team.

An early appearance for 19-year old Jack Brown as he was subbed on for McCann who appeared to be struggling.

Edinburgh imposed themselves further as Thompson was able to shift the ball wide releasing Currie who offloaded to give Ritchie Edinburgh's second of the night. Thompson was unable to convert.

Jack Brown made a positive impact as he displayed incredible composure under the high ball and was able to make the mark giving Edinburgh a break.

Sharks pulled closer as Hendrikse sent it over the posts to get the three after Muncaster was deemed coming in from the side.

HT: Edinburgh 10 – 6 Sharks

Sharks couldn't have asked for a better start to the second half. Some brilliant vision by Lukhanyo Am to throw the dummy created a two on one with Fassi on his shoulder – who amended his first half performance with a score. Hendrikse added the extras.

It was not Fassi's night as he was caught on the backfoot of a nice grubber through by Thompson. He was then unable to gather it and Edinburgh dived on the ball giving them a shot at the tryline.

Things bubbled over after this with a brawl erupting which saw

neither side come out on top with Skinner and Etzebeth receiving yellow cards – leaving the sharks with 13 men.

Following the two yellow cards Ashman went crashing over to round off an incredibly tense period – Thompson didn't miss this time extending Edinburgh's lead by another two.

Hendrikse failed to pull his team closer to Edinburgh during the second half as he missed multiple penalties that usually could have been an easy additional three points.

With just over twenty minutes played of the second half, the sharks got a much-needed boost as they excellently repelled a notable Edinburgh attack. This, however, did not phase the home side as they continued to pin the Sharks in their own half through tremendous physicality.

The visitors' troubles were only worsened as any effort was blocked whilst they searched for something to gain back moment. With 5 minutes left to play, Edinburgh maintained a fragile four-point lead.

In typical rugby fashion, Sharks with one last attempt attacked Edinburgh's line ferociously getting no success from the forwards. With a hand up, the ball was launched wide to Mapimpi who had more than enough space to dive over in the corner. Giving Sharks the lead and the game.

FT: Edinburgh 17 – 18 Sharks

Yellow cards –

Edinburgh: Skinner (48")

Sharks: Am (47"), Etzebeth (48")

Scoring sequence (Edinburgh first): 0-3, 5-3, 10-3, 10-13, 17-13, 17-18

Scorers –

Edinburgh: J.Lang, J.Ritchie, E.Ashman

Sharks: Am, Fassi, Mapimpi

MOTM – A.Esterhuizen

Attendance: 7,774

Teams:

Edinburgh – P.Schoeman (B.Venter 58") ,E.Ashman + 76"(D.Cherry 57"), D.Rae (A.Williams 80"), S.Skinner (G.Young 68"), G.Gilchrist (C), J.Ritchie, B.Muncaster(F.Douglas 51"), M.Bradbury, A.Price (C.Shiel 70"), R.Thompson, R.McCann(J.Brown) 24", M.Tuipulotu, J.Lang, M.Currie, H.Paterson, D.Cherry, B.Venter, A.Williams, G.Young, F.Douglas, C.Shiel, C.Scott, J.Brown

Sharks – O.Niche (Mchunu 56"), B.Mbonambi, V.Koch, E.Etzebeth (C), Emile Van Heerden, P.Buthelezi (J.venter 66"), V.Tshituka, S.Kolisi, J.Hendrikse(G.Williams), J.Hendrikse, M.Mapimpi, A.Esterhuizen, L.Am, E.Hooker, A.Fassi (S.Masuku 59"), F.Mbatha, N.Mchunu, H.Jacobs, J.Jenkins, J.Venter, G.Williams, S.Masuku, J.Julius



Mapimpi dives over the line in the 80th minute to win the game for Sharks PHOTO David Gibson Fotosport