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DOUGLAS STRUTH VELC

Hello and welcome back to DAM Health Stadium for tonight's massive BKT United Rugby Championship match-up with Munster under the Friday night lights.

I'll start my welcome by paying tribute to the legendary Doddie Weir OBE whose heroic battle against Motor Neuron Disease tragically came to an end on Saturday.

We found out the news as we arrived back in Edinburgh from Treviso and it's safe to say there was a huge feeling of emotion on the team flight, from players, coaches, supporters and sponsors.

That sense of grief and attachment to Doddie just showcases the impact of the man.

The role of the rugby community is now more important than ever, and must continue his incredible fight against MND.

All of us at Edinburgh Rugby send our thoughts to Doddie's family, friends and former teammates.

It's heartening, that we're able to help honour his legacy this evening with a number of initiatives to raise awareness and funds for the My Name'5 Doddie Foundation.

It's been over a month since we've welcomed our fans to DAM Health Stadium and so it's fantastic that we're back together tonight, where your support will be vital as ever, with Munster the visitors to the Scottish capital.

Our squad love playing at DAM Health Stadium and that's down to you – our fans. You've made our home a fortress and the noise you create from first minute to last is so key in driving our players forward. We're anticipating an electric atmosphere come 7.35pm tonight.

On the rugby front, we were all disappointed with last weekend's result against Benetton, especially considering how well we played in road wins at Zebre and Cardiff.

Our younger players really stepped up in those victories and they've laid the ground for our more experienced players to return ahead of a crucial run of games, both domestically and in Europe.

With huge Heineken Champions Cup matches against Saracens and Castres on the horizon, followed by back-to-back festive derbies against Glasgow Warriors, the blockbuster match-ups really do come thick and fast this time of year.

It's such an exciting time to be an Edinburgh Rugby supporter. f you haven't yet got your tickets for these games then I'd encourage you to do so when they're on sale – our players need your backing to ensure we head into the business end of the campaign in top form.

Our focus, however, remains on the task at hand tonight with Munster still one of the most powerful sides in the URC.

The squad will be desperate to impress in front of our home support, while our coaching team will be expecting a reaction following last weekend's defeat.

We can't wait to see you back in the stands – it's going to be a special, and emotional, night at DAM Health Stadium.

Enjoy the match

Douglas Struth Edinburgh Rugby Managing Director #AlwaysEdinburgh



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	DARCY GRAHAM	14	CALVIN NASH	
	MARK BENNETT	13	ANTOINE FRISCH	
	CHRIS DEAN	12	RORY SCANNELL	
	DUHAN VAN DER MERWE	11	SIMON ZEBO	
	BLAIR KINGHORN	10	JOEY CARBERY	
	BEN VELLACOTT	9	CRAIG CASEY	
	PIERRE SCHOEMAN	1	JEREMY LOUGHMAN	
	PADDY HARRISON	2	NIALL SCANNELL	
	LUAN DE BRUIN	3	JOHN RYAN	
	JAMIE HODGSON	4	JEAN KLEYN	
	GRANT GILCHRIST (CC)	5	TADHG BEIRNE	
	JAMIE RITCHIE (CC)	6	PETER O'MAHONY (C)	
	LUKE CROSBIE	7	JOHN HODNETT	
	VILIAME MATA	8	GAVIN COOMBES	

16. DIARMUID BARRON 17. JOSH WYCHERLEY
18. ROMAN SALANDA 19. JACK O'DONOGHUE
20. ALEX KENDELLEN 21. PADDY PATTERSON
22. JACK CROWLEY 23. PATRICK CAMPBELL

16. TOM CRUSE 17. BOAN VENTER 18. WP NEL 19. MARSHALL SYKES 20. NICK HAINING 21. CHARLIE SHIEL 22. JACO VAN DER WALT 23. JAMES LANG



REMEMBERING DODDIE A TARTAN TRIBUTE

Doddie Weir OBE passed away at his Borders home with his family by his side as his extraordinary battle against Motor Neurone Disease came to a close.

Doddie's colourful and positive character won the hearts of fans on and off the pitch whether it be for his athletic and eye-catching performances in the Dark Blue of Scotland or for the inspirational response to his MND diagnosis.

Rugby and family were at the centre of Doddie's life and having attended Stewart's Melville School in Edinburgh his sporting ability saw him eventually turn out for the school's own club side before moving on to Melrose as a young lock in 1991.

Doddie went on to win 61 full Scotland caps, having made his debut in 1990 against Argentina in a

resounding 49-3 victory, in the first Test match between the two sides.

His form for Scotland and Newcastle saw him selected to the British & Irish Lions touring party to South Africa in 1997, which was immortalised in the 'Living with the Lions' series and brought Doddie's character and famous humour to a wider rugby audience.

After hanging up his boots his experiences and exuberant character remained in demand and perfectly fitted the after- dinner and hospitality circuit where his trademark tartan suits and quick wit extended the affection fans felt for him. He worked regularly on matchdays at Murrayfield and was renowned for his mischief and legendary tall stories. It was only fitting then that when Doddie received the life changing MND diagnosis, the launch of his new Foundation came at the home of Scottish Rugby in November 2017.

In a now iconic moment in the Edinburgh stadium's history Doddie, accompanied by his three sons, Hamish, Ben and Angus delivered the match ball ahead of Scotland's game against the All Blacks to a rapturous ovation from the capacity crowd.

His fight with MND was now public and the My Name'5 Doddie Foundation launched officially that night would be the focus and the inspiration for the next five years.

By putting his name to the campaign Doddie was able to access support on a global scale for his drive to ensure MND research was properly funded and the challenge of living with the condition understood and respected.

His efforts did not go unnoticed and the former lock was given an OBE in 2019 for services to rugby, MND research and to the wider Borders community.

Scottish Rugby commissioned the Doddie Weir Cup in 2018 to raise awareness of his work and recognise his contribution to the game, which is now contested between Scotland and Wales each time the teams play.

In 2020, Doddie was inducted into the Scottish Rugby's Hall of Fame. As the 27th inductee, his humorous personality was evident, "This means so much to me," Doddie said. "And it's great that there are four Melrose men in the Hall of Fame and only two from Gala!"

His passing will leave not just a powerful legacy for MND awareness but for the power of kindness and taking on seemingly insurmountable challenges with humour, dignity and innovation. In their family statement his wife Kathy described Doddie as an "inspirational force of nature". He certainly was.







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REMEMBERING DERRY MORRICE

Scottish Rugby last week announced the tragic loss of Health and Safety Manager Derry Morrice who sadly passed away after a period of illness.

Derry was one of Scottish Rugby's real unsung heroes who quietly, and proudly, went about his work to ensure events ran safely and staff were protected through his highly professional health and safety approach.

Derry joined Scottish Rugby in February 2016 from Edinburgh City Council where he had been a Public Safety Officer overseeing some of the busy city's largest events, such as the annual Hogmanay celebrations.

Derry was one of the leading figures in the regular meetings with all the emergency services and city safety officials to test and assess Scottish Rugby's readiness for major events and any subsequent public safety issues which may arise.

Derry, like many others, stepped up and played a significant role in the Threat Management Group which worked through the daily challenges Covid presented. Along with his colleagues in Health & Safety he provided consistent and sound advice during a period of genuine uncertainty and concern.

Its success was down to a real

collaborative effort from our own people and many external stakeholders, something which would not have been possible without Derry and his H&S colleague's invaluable input.

Derry leaves a wife, Katrina and two children, Megan and Luke, who are very much in our thoughts and prayers at this incredibly sad time.

We ask supporters to join us at this Friday night's Munster match as we pay tribute to Derry pre-game with a moment's applause to celebrate his life.









































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GILCO'S DODDIE TRIBUTE

This week club co-captain Grant Gilchrist gave his tributes to Scottish legend Doddie Weir, discussing his legacy and the impact he's had on the rugby world.

"What a legacy he's left with the stuff he's done on and off the field. People will talk about him forever. The work he's done with his charity and the courage he's shown over the last six years is incredible.

"I think we've got to use Doddie's memory and legacy going forward on the pitch. We spoke ahead of the New Zealand game about doing Doddie and his family proud, and that shouldn't just be a one-off game against New Zealand. "It's a massive year for the national team and what he's done, we could never repay. But if we fight and play with the spirit he would want us to have, we can make sure we do him proud and also keep pushing the charity work that he's started because that's important as well.

"We want to find a cure for this horrible disease, and that doesn't stop now – it keeps going forever.

"Every time you got a chance to meet Doddie, you always had a smile on your face," said the 32-year-old.

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"I was lucky enough to meet him numerous times through the years and he was always smiling and up for a laugh.

"We live in a serious world and professional sport is a serious business but it's important to get a balance, and characters like Doddie make such a difference.

"On the field, he was a wonderful rugby player. Those runs in the loose, I can see images of him running through the middle of the pitch when I was a youngster growing up.

"He's a legend of the sport but what he's done for MND and the bravery and courage he's shown in the last six years is probably what people will focus on because that's really special.

"It takes such a special character to go through what he did and be completely selfless about it. What he and his family went through must have been absolutely horrific but all he cared about was making a difference, and he's done that.

"It was really emotional both times when he came out before the All Blacks games, I had a tear in my eye the first time in 2017. I was on the bench that day. I remember tears running down my face as I went to sit back down on the bench, just thinking 'wow, that was a special moment'. Two weeks ago was the misame.

> "The best atmosphere I've ever felt in rugby inwas probably those two moments. It inwas weird trying to channel all that nemotion into your performance."

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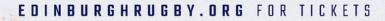






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Mark Bennett You're Welcome Jack Blain Saturday Night (radio mix) Pepas (Kicks) Connor Boyle Batman Theme Song Dave Cherry Boys are back in town Harrison Courtney Bohemian Rhapsody Luke Crosbie B.O.T.A (Baddest of them all) Tom Cruse Who Let The Dogs Out Matt Currie Samba de Janeiro Chris Dean Born to be Wild Grant Gilchrist Rocking all over the World Darcy Graham Yabba Dabba Doo / CanCan Bruce Houston Right Here, Right Now Damien Hoyland Walking on the Waves Henry Immelman WWE: Stone Cold Steve Austin Blair Kinghorn Teach me how to Dougie Stuart McInally Don't Stop me Now Pierce Phillips Man I feel like a woman Jamie Ritchie Edge of Seventeen Pierre Schoeman The Greatest Show Charlie Shiel Yes Sir I Can Boogie Sam Skinner California Dreamin' Jaco van der Walt Seven Nation Army Ben Vellacott Can't be Touched Boan Venter WWE: The Game (Triple H) Glen Young We like to Party

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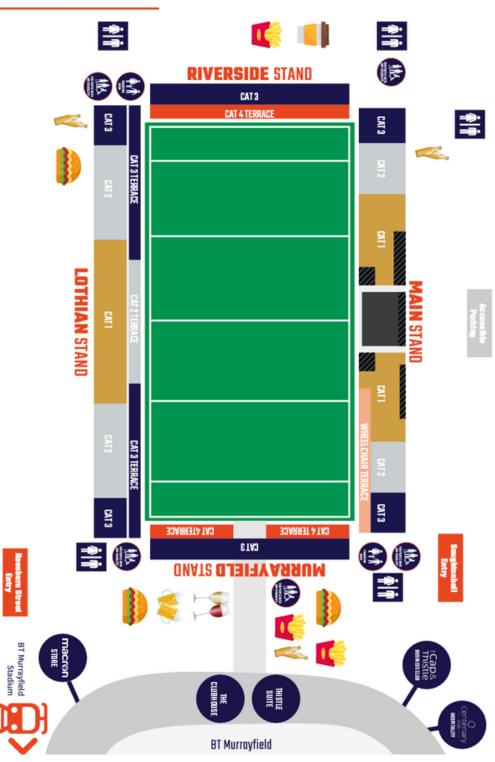
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PRESS PASS with MIKE BLAIR



ON DODDIE WEIR

"It is really sad. For the family reading all the comments about him must be really special. It made me think about Tom Smith as well. Both part of that 97 Lions tour and the regard they were held both on and off the pitch.

It is a sad moment for Scottish Rugby but to look back at it and what he has achieved, more so over the last five years. What he did on the pitch has maybe been overshadowed by the enormity of what he has managed to do off the pitch in that time.

"You always see him with a smile on his face, laughing, joking, being selfless. Same with Rob Borrow. Amazing guys. Really sad news."

MEMORIES OF DODDIE

"I think I played against him once at Meadowbank. I was with Edinburgh and he was the Borders in the inter pro in 2004 maybe. He was winding down a little bit at that stage.

"You have those little quiet moments in life, and I get them every so often. I don't miss playing for Scotland or miss playing rugby a huge amount. There are a couple of times though over the last ten years when I have taken a breath and taken it all in.

"In 2017 (when Doddie delivered match ball ahead of All Blacks game) when I was Scotland Assistant Coach and the game against them again a couple of weeks ago there was another one. Both involved Doddie. They made me reflect on the experiences I have had, how fortune I have been to have those experiences. Definitely an emotional one.

ON THE BENETTON DEFEAT

"I thought Benetton were excellent. It was a really emotional performance from them.

"They are a difficult team to beat and I thought they did well, but we have to look at ourselves and say that wasn't us out there. We need to fix that.

ON WINNING WITHOUT 'BIG NAMES'

"It's hard to answer as the guys had done brilliantly winning those two away games. That wasn't the league expectation.

"Cardiff won in Durban on Sunday so they're not a bad team at all. There's definitely pleasing bits, but it is that consistency and understanding that you maybe struggle to get with a less experienced group.

We are pleased on the whole with that block of three games. Getting 10 points from three away games isn't a bad return at all."

ON RETURNING INTERNATIONALISTS

"There is a bit of trying to work out the best way to utilise the guys coming back. Do they come back on the bench or do they start and get in the groove straight away.

"I expect them to be up to speed quickly because they've all been doing bits and bobs in their time off. It's not as if they've been sitting idle the whole time. I expect them to come in and hit the ground running."



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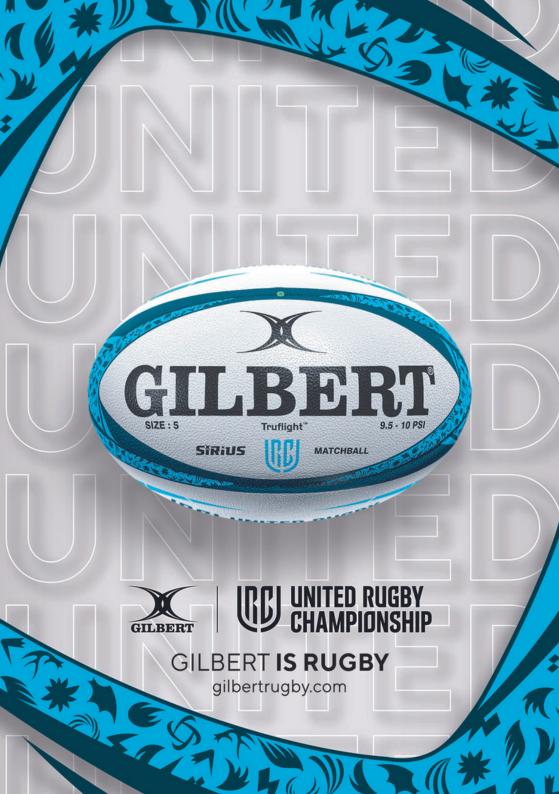
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NEW KI THE BL

Edinburgh confirmed the short-term signing of experienced hooker Tom Cruse, with the former Wasps man set to debut for the capital from the bench against Munster.

Cruse joined the club with immediate effect, having left Wasps after the English Premiership side entered administration last month.

The former Sale Sharks and London Irish front-row adds further experience and cover for Edinburgh's stable of hookers, with both Adam McBurney and Dave Cherry expected to miss time through injury.

Cruse said: "Edinburgh is an amazing club with great coaching staff and an exciting squad of players.

"The chance to come up and experience a different competition is one I'm looking forward to, along with living in an incredible city.



"It's a privilege to be given this opportunity and one I cannot wait to get stuck into." Having come through Sale Sharks' academy – where he made his professional debut in 2012 – Cruse made his breakthrough at Rotherham Titans where he scored 11 tries in 44 appearances.

His Championship form quickly earned him a move to the English Premiership, with London Irish in 2015/16.

Cruse then made the move to Wasps a season later, where he developed into one of the most consistent and mobile hookers in England's top flight, scoring 21 tries in 114 appearances for the six-times English Champions.

He also featured for Barbarians FC as the invitational side took on Bath Rugby at The Rec, claiming a last-minute 30-31 win.

Head Coach Mike Blair added: "We're delighted to bring in Tom on a short-term deal – he's an experienced player whose played consistently at a high level for a long time.

"With Adam and Dave both side-lined for a short period, the addition of Tom is vital as we return to action and compete in both the United Rugby Championship and Champions Cup."







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