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Good evening, and welcome back to DAM Health Stadium for tonight's BKT United Rugby Championship match against Leinster.

It's a clash of the capitals, and challenges don't get much bigger than facing the men from Dublin. Our visitors are unbeaten in both the URC and the Champions Cup, so it won't be an easy task, however I'm sure that the noise from the terraces that we've heard so much all season will spur us on.

The play-offs are still well within our grasp, and we'll need all of your support to help us as we enter the final stages of the season.

The biggest piece of news from the club in the last few weeks has been that Mike Blair will be stepping down as our Head Coach. I'd like to thank Mike for his contribution to Edinburgh Rugby. He's a club legend and has played a big part in creating many memorable moments for the club, with a lot still to play for in the current campaign.

I'd also like to commend him for what is a proactive, positive, and brave decision, which is in keeping with how he has operated in the past season and a half with the club. During this time we have made notable progress under his leadership – driving standards and our style of play in our new home.

Since our last home game against the Cell C Sharks we have been able to watch players from this club excel on the world stage. We've seen eight of our players representing Scotland in the Six Nations, and thriving in the process.

There have been so many moments to celebrate, from Duhan's miracle try at Twickenham, Luke Crosbie lifting the Calcutta Cup in his first Six Nations appearance, to Blair Kinghorn's stellar performance against Wales. It's always special to see Edinburgh players playing international rugby, but even more so when they're thriving like they have been.

Closer to home, we've been able to announce a number of players that will be continuing with Edinburgh Rugby in the coming seasons.

Charlie Savala and Angus Williams have both extended terms, as well as Scotland Internationalist Mark Bennett. Each player has been deserving of their new deals, and I'm excited to see them continue to develop at this club.

We were able to announce Angus Williams' new deal at Portobello beach, while he and Henry Immelman were visiting Portobello RFC for a community session on the beach. The OurBurgh campaign has seen our players back visiting our local clubs throughout the season, rebuilding our connection with the grassroots game after activity had stopped during the pandemic. Porty are here tonight for the game, welcome to everyone who has come along!

Tonight is set to be another big crowd and another important game at DAM Health Stadium. Make some noise for the team, and enjoy the night!

Enjoy the game!

Douglas Struth Edinburgh Rugby Managing Director #AlwavsEdinburgh



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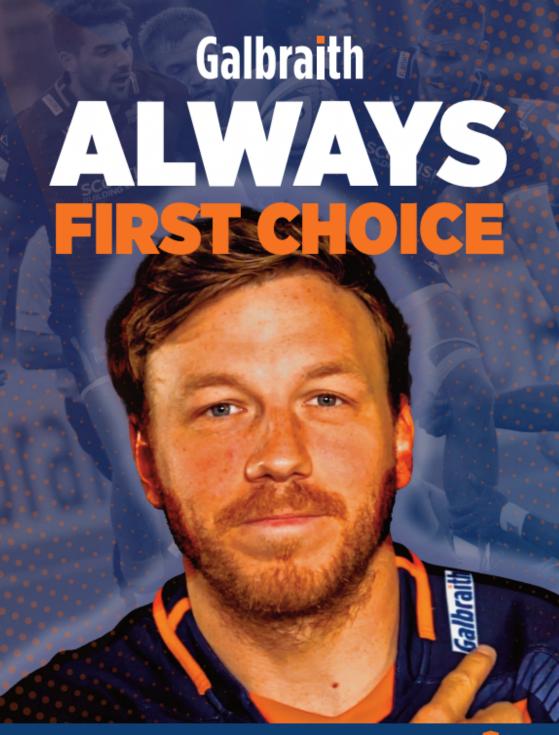


"Everyone at DAM Health wishes Edinburgh Rugby all the best successes this season."



Professor Frank Joseph Director of Medicine, DAM Health







TEAM LINEUPS

EDINBURGH LEINSTER

EMILIANO BOFFELLI 15 APHELELE FASSI DAMIEN HOYLAND 14 JORDAN LARMOUR 13 MARK RENNETT **HAM THRNFR** JAMES LANG 12 JAMIE OSBORNE **WES GOOSEN** 11 **DAVE KEARNEY** CHARLIE SAVALA 10 HARRY RYRNE REN VELLACOTT 9 HIKE MCGRATH **BOAN VENTER** MICHAEL MILNE 1 STHART MCINALLY 2 JOHN MCKFF IFF-RNY ATALIFN 3 MICHAFI ALA'ALATNA MARSHALL SYKES ROSS MOLONY SAM SKINNER 5 JASON JENKINS RHYS RUDDOCK (C) LUKE CROSBIE (C) 6 HAMISH WATSON 7 **SCOTT PENNY** VII IAME MATA R MAX DEEGAN

16. DAVE CHERRY 17. JAMIE JACK
18. ELLIOT MILLAR-MILLS 19. JAMIE HODGSON
20. NICK HAINING 21. CHARLIE SHIEL
22. JACO VAN DER WALT 23. CHRIS DEAN

16. LEE BARRON 17. JACK BOYLE
18. THOMAS CLARKSON 19. BRIAN DEENY
20. WILL CONNORS 21. NICK MCCARTHY
22. CHARLIE TECTOR 23. ROB RUSSELL



Mike Blair announced publicly last Friday morning that he would be standing down as Edinburgh Rugby's Head Coach.

Blair debuted for Edinburgh as a player in 2001, becoming the 1029th person to represent the capital club. He went on to become a club legend, becoming a club centurion, Scotland Internationalist, and British & Irish Lion.

His coaching career saw him return to his hometown club, steering the club in the first season at DAM Health Stadium. Attractive, flowing rugby saw the club claim the Scottish x Italian shield, the 1872 Cup, and knock-out rugby in the URC and Challenge Cup.

On his decision, Mike said: "I have loved doing the role I am doing in terms of the learning I have got out of it and how I have tried to improve myself, but it has made it really clear to me that the coaching part of it is the bit I really enjoy"

"When I thought about all the other bits I have got to do, whether it is recruitment, budget, academies or player release, I realised I had to make a decision on whether it would be the head coach or the attack coach bit I would stop doing, because I didn't feel I could do a really good job in both areas.

"The stuff on the field is the stuff I get the buzz from – thinking about what we can do differently to improve the team – and that is where I have decided I want my focus to go.

"I am really pleased with the decision – it is something really positive for me.

"I believe I'm adapting, I believe I'm improving, but then there is the all-encompassing nature of it," he added. "When I go home, I'm at home but I'm not really at home. I'm thinking selections, I'm thinking recruitment, I'm thinking scheduling, all these different bits, and it's probably taking away from stuff like: 'How do we want to attack at our best? What can we do in training to make that better? Can I watch the Super Rugby games and keep myself up to speed with that side of things?'

"It's just the ability to get your head out of the jobbecause I care so much. I read a great book by a guy called Cody Royle called 'The Tough Stuff' in which he interviews head coaches from all different sports, including rugby union, American Football, rugby league. And he talks about the weight of the job, looking after 45 players, other coaches and the rest of the support team.

"I genuinely care about our guys. As I said to them on Friday that I feel like a father to some of them, I feel like a brother to others, and that does weigh on you a little bit. At the moment, I want to put a real focus on what is my passion and that's around hands-on coaching.

"This isn't a case of: 'I'm never going to do it [be a head coach] again'. I've had a couple of years of it and I'm going to have a period of reflection at some stage. This has been a rollercoaster and I've not really had the time to sit back and say: 'Where do we go from here?' and: 'If I were to do it again, what would I do differently?'.

"This experience will have definitely done me good. Being able to go away and reflect and think about what I could have done differently will stand me in better stead for the future."



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TEAM SPIRIT

GLEN MORAY









"I'm really excited to sign a new deal with the club. We've got a great group of players here who all love representing this city.

"It's been awesome to pick up a bit more game time this year and I feel like I'm improving every week. The tightheads at the club all push each other on in training and you can only get better when going up against guys like Pierre Schoeman.

"It was obviously disappointing to pick up a knee injury in training last month but rehab is going great and I'm progressing well. I can't wait to pull the jersey back on soon and help the team finish the season strong."



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This week star centre and Scotland internationalist Mark Bennett penned a new two-year deal to remain in the Scottish capital.

Bennett, 30, has been one of Edinburgh Rugby's standout performers in recent years, with the Olympic silver medallist providing attacking flair and leadership in the capital midfield.

Bennett's return to form was given official recognition when he was named Scottish Building Society Player of the Season for 2021/22.

That was followed by a call-up to Scotland's summer tour squad, where he started and played 80 minutes in all three Tests against Argentina, scoring two tries.

Bennett has been almost ever-present in 2022/23, starting in every match he's been selected, with nine BKT URC appearances and three Heineken Champions Cup games to his name so far this campaign.

The former Cumnock and Ayr RFC man now can't wait to continue represent Edinburgh Rugby moving forward, sharing his delight at today extending terms with the capital side.

Bennett said: "I'm absolutely delighted to be staying in Edinburgh. I love it here and there's nowhere else I'd want to be playing my rugby right now.

"With the exciting squad we've got in place, and a brilliant new home, it's a real joy to run out every week and represent our supporters.



"I mentioned for a while that perhaps Edinburgh fans hadn't seen the best of me because of injuries, but it feels now that we've got such a great attacking blueprint in place, and one that I can really thrive in moving forward."

Bennett's form has continued onto the international stage in 2022/23 with the centre featuring in the recent Autumn Nations Series Tests at BT Murrayfield.

Bennett – who has won 30 caps for Scotland – started against Australia, before coming off the bench in the narrow defeat to the All Blacks.

Back on club duty, the centre's attention now turns to a run of vital BKT URC and Heineken Champions fixtures that could well shape Edinburgh's season.

He continued: "We've got a run of huge games to end the season, starting with an unbeaten Leinster side at home this Saturday night.

"It doesn't get much bigger than the Irish giants coming to town to play in front of a packed house with our fans behind us. It's a massive challenge for us, but one we're all absolutely relishing as a squad."

Edinburgh Rugby Head Coach Mike Blair has welcomed the re-signing of Bennett: "Mark's re-signing is really important for the club. His leadership and experience is vital, while his smarts and reading of the game allows us to play with an attacking style that really suits his skillset.

"Mark's resilience has also been really impressive. There aren't too many players in rugby who've had to work their way back from injuries and setbacks like he has, and that's credit to his strong will and desire to play the game he loves.

"We were really proud to see Mark pick up last year's Scottish Building Society Player of the Season, before gaining further international honours in the Summer and Autumn Tests.

"It's brilliant that he'll continue playing his rugby in Edinburgh for the seasons to come."



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EDINBURGH RUGBY

FIRST TEAM SQUAD



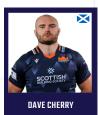










































BLAIR KINGHORN



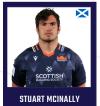




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MURRAY MCCALLUM









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PIERRE SCHOEMAN









DUHAN VAN DER MERWE













EDINBURGH RUGBY

ACADEMY 2022/23





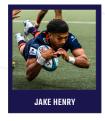




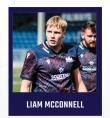






















PLAYER TRY TRACKS

Lee-Roy Atalifo
Nick Auterac
Mark Bennett
Jack Blain
Saturday Night (radio mix)
Emiliano Boffelli
Four String Love
Rosie Sagaitu
The Trashmen
Dwayne Johnson
Whigfield
Bizarrap

Emiliano Boffelli Quevedo (Tries) Bizarrap
Pepas (Kicks) Farruko

Connor Boyle Batman Theme Song Neil Hefti & his Orchestra and Chorus
Dave Cherry Boys are back in town Thin Lizzy
Harrison Courtney Bohemian Rhapsody Oueen

Luke Crosbie B.O.T.A (Baddest of them all) Eliza Ross, Interplanetary Criminal

Matt Currie Samba de Janeiro Bellini
Luan De Bruin Paradise City Guns N Roses
Chris Dean Born to be Wild Bruce Springsteen

Grant Gilchrist Rocking all over the World Status Quo
Wes Goosen The Greatest SIX60

Darcy Graham Yabba Dabba Doo / CanCan [Custom]
Nick Haining Live it Up Mental as Anything

Jamie Hodgson Underdog Kasabian
Bruce Houston Right Here, Right Now Fatboy Slim

Damien Hoyland Walking on the Waves Skippinish
Cammy Hutchison Toxic Britney Spears
Henry Immelman WWE: Stone Cold Steve Austin Jim Johnston

Jamie Jack Can't Stop Red Hot Chilli Peppers
Blair Kinghorn Teach me how to Dougie Cali Swag District

James Lang Hound Dog Elvis Presley
Bill Mata Ukulele Blad P2a ft. Khazin
Adam McBurney Tell Me Ma Sham Rock

Adam McBurney Tell Me Ma Sham Rock
Murray McCallum Beautiful Sunday Daniel Boone
Stuart McInally Don't Stop me Now Queen
Ben Muncaster Crazy Frog Axel F

WP Nel Umfaan Far East movement
Pierce Phillips Man I feel like a woman Shania Twain
Henry Pyrgos Light it Up Major Lazer
Jamie Ritchie Edge of Seventeen Stevie Nicks
Charlie Savala Down Under Men at Work

Pierre Schoeman The Greatest Show The Greatest Showman Ensemble

Charlie Shiel Yes Sir I Can Boogie Baccara
Sam Skinner California Dreamin' The Mamas & the Papas

Marshall Sykes Candy Shop 50 Cent

Duhan van der Merwe L'Amour Toujours Gigi D'Agostino

Jaco van der Walt

Ben Vellacott
Boan Venter

WWE: The Game (Triple H)

White Stripes
Roy Jones
Jim Johnston

Boan Venter WWE: The Game (Triple H) Jim Johnston
Hamish Watson This is the One Stone Roses
Angus Williams Back in Black ACDC
Glen Young We like to Party Vengaboys



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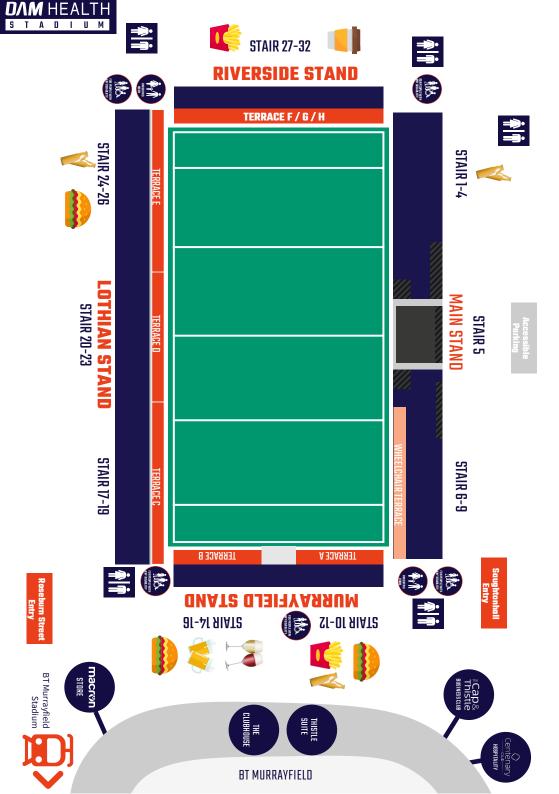
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There's plenty on the go at DAM Health Stadium today, with a Family Fun Day theme, there's activities for the whole family as gates open from 3.35pm.

The Supporters Clubhouse, located in the Thistle Suite, will once again be open both pre and post match, giving fans the perfect hub to stay warm while dining on a fantastic sit-down menu.

SCOTTISH BUILDING SOCIETY HIGHLAND GAMES

Head over to Pitch 1 (located behind the Lothian Stand) and take part in the Scottish Building Society Highland Games from 3.35pm!

With activities for both kids and adults, there's plenty to keep your whole squad entertained on Family Fun Day.

LIVE MUSIC FROM BLEEKER

Edinburgh's favourite double act return to DAM Health Stadium with a live performance in the Fan Zone from 4pm!

Grab a beer and sing along to some classics ahead of the big kick-off in the capital!

GET YOUR PHOTO WITH THE CALCUTTA CUP AND DODDIE WEIR CUP

Fresh from being lifted by Edinburgh and Scotland captain Jamie Ritchie, both the Calcutta Cup and Doddie Weir Cup will be on display in the Supporters Clubhouse prematch.

Drop by and get your picture next to the famous trophies which will be on display from 3.35pm to 4.30pm.

PAPA JOHNS TARTAN TOUCH FESTIVAL

The popular Tartan Touch initiative will return this summer with a record number of hubs signed up for the non-contact rugby programme.

Head over to Pitch 2 (located behind the Lothian Stand) to watch a tartan touch festival from 3.45pm to 4.45pm as teams from Dalkeith, North Berwick, Lismore, Leith, Musselburgh and Lasswade take part ahead of kick-off!

The two leading sides will then play a showpiece final at HT of the main event in DAM Health Stadium.

FACE PAINTING

Show your colours and get your face painted on Family Fun Day!

Our face painter will be set up in the Supporters Clubhouse pre-match, so drop by and make sure you represent your club with pride.

HALF TIME MINI STRESS BALL GIVEAWAY

Our non-playing players will be put to work at half-time, so keep your eye out and catch a mini stress ball!

Our squad will be walking round the pitch at the interval giving you the perfect opportunity to get your hands on a freebie!



MASCOTS



Jackson Harkins

Age: 11 (today!)

Ellon Rugby Club

Favourite player: Duhan van der Merwe



Hamish Smith

Age: 9

Stirling County RFC/Dollar Academy

Favourite player: Hamish Watson



Jack Gaul

Age: 9

Stew Mel Lions

Favourite player: Emiliano Boffelli/Chris Dean



BKT UNITED RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP





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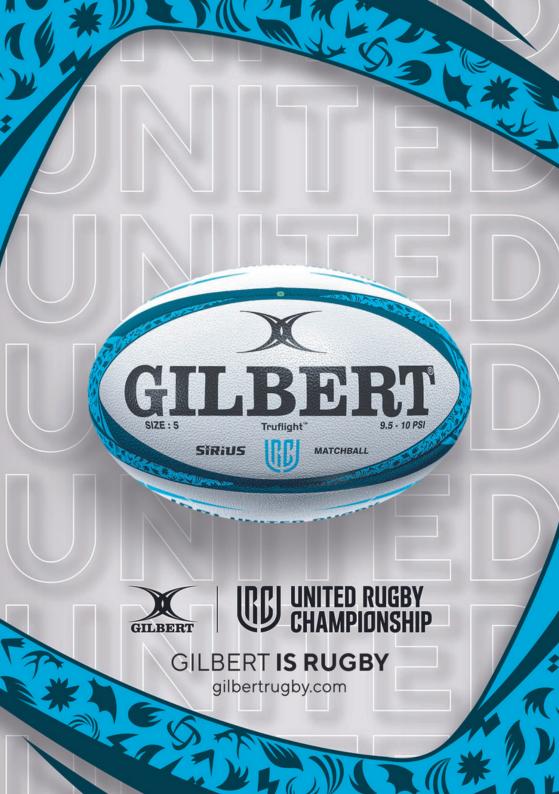
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FROM THE ARCHIVE

EDINBURGH 29 LEINSTER 24 FEBRUARY 9, 2018

Mark Bennett scored a last-minute try to give Edinburgh a dramatic win at Myreside.

With time running out, it looked as though the hosts' wastefulness with the boot would cost them victory despite running in four tries.

However, Bennett was on hand to collect a Jaco van der Walt kick and, after a painful wait for confirmation, the try was given to the delight of the crowd.

There was barely time to restart the game before the referee blew the whistle to give Edinburgh an entertaining win.

EDINBURGH 28 LEINSTER 11 MARCH 22, 2019

Edinburgh remained in the running for a PRO14 play-off spot after posting a comfortable win at BT Murrayfield.

The Scots went into the game with little or no wriggle room in their ultimately unsuccessful race for a top-four finish and they produced a workmanlike effort to see off a Leinster outfit who already had top spot in Conference B sewn up.

Edinburgh reached the break with a 14-11 lead through a penalty try and a WP Nel touchdown, which was converted by Van der Walt. Further scores by Ross Ford and Bill Mata ensured a maximum five-point haul for the home side. Leinster's points came in the first half through a Sean Cronin try and two penalties from Ciaran Frawley.







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