

Edinburgh Rugby vs Castres Olympique  
Saturday 16 December, 1pm  
Hive Stadium



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— *Welcome*

# Douglas Struth

Good evening, and welcome  
to HIVE Stadium for this  
afternoon's EPCR Challenge  
Cup clash against Castres  
Olympique.



It's great to have European rugby back in the Scottish capital and it's exciting to welcome Castres Olympique to Edinburgh, a team we now know pretty well having faced them in last year's Champions Cup competition.

While it was a disappointing result in Clermont last weekend, there was no shortage of desire or effort across the park and I know the squad will be desperate to bounce back with a win this weekend in front of our home support.

European rugby undoubtedly has a special feel about it and with an early kick-off on 'Festive Fun Day', I hope our fans will be able to get in the Christmas spirit and create a red-hot atmosphere for the players to feed off from first whistle to last.

Our supporters never cease to amaze me and that was certainly reinforced this week when we surpassed the 20,000 tickets-sold mark for our 1872 Cup clash against Glasgow Warriors at Scottish Gas Murrayfield on Saturday 30 December.

This really does highlight the scale of the intercity derby and just how passionate this city is for professional rugby.

We now have a real chance of breaking the attendance record for this fixture (27,437 achieved in 2019) which would be an incredible achievement for all connected to the club – thank you once again for your support, and I for one can't wait to see Scottish Gas Murrayfield bouncing ahead of Hogmanay.



From a performance perspective, a lot of work is going in across the club to launch the first-ever Edinburgh Rugby women's team, who kick-off their Celtic Challenge campaign against Glasgow Warriors ahead of the men's derby on Saturday 30 December.

We were delighted to this week appoint Claire Cruikshank as the new Head Coach of our women's team and I've got no doubt she'll excel in the role having achieved so much in her position as Ladies Rugby Head of Performance at University of Edinburgh.

I'd encourage all our supporters to get behind Edinburgh Rugby women's team on Saturday 30 December and make it a derby day to remember – tickets for 12 noon kick-off in Hive Stadium are available now at [edinburghrugby.org](http://edinburghrugby.org)

With Christmas and Hogmanay just around the corner, it's definitely a time to reflect on the year past and everything we've achieved as a club together.



Attendances at Hive Stadium continue to go from strength to strength which is a testament to Edinburgh supporters who have really made Hive Stadium a fortress. It's appreciated by all of us at the club and excites me for what's to come in 2024.

Merry Christmas to all the Edinburgh supporters – enjoy today's European clash and see you back at Scottish Gas Murrayfield for the 1872 Cup decider!

*Douglas Struth, Managing Director*

# *EPCR Welcome*

# Dominic

# McKay



A warm welcome to this Round 2 match in the 2023/24 EPCR Challenge Cup in what promises to be another compelling season as we acknowledge two key additions to our suite of blue-chip commercial partners.

Investec, the leading international bank and wealth manager, have come on board as an official tournament partner in a landmark agreement which complements their title partnership of the Investec Champions Cup, and as we continue to expand our footprint into new markets, Georgia Rugby Marketing Hub have also joined as an official partner of both the EPCR Challenge Cup and the Investec Champions Cup.

In a further hugely positive development, the Tbilisi-based Black Lion are the first Georgian club to compete in the EPCR Challenge Cup, while the Hollywoodbets Sharks from Durban are also appearing in the tournament for the first time.

So, as the competition extends its reach to Georgia, the 2023/24 season will see 18 clubs in three pools play four pool stage rounds, followed by four knockout stage rounds, culminating in the 2024 final at London's state-of-the-art Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Friday, 24 May.

The four highest-ranked clubs from each pool will qualify for the Round of 16, and to make the quest for silverware even more

demanding, four clubs from the Investec Champions Cup will also qualify for the EPCR Challenge Cup knockout stage.

We are delighted to be joined on the journey to London by our official partners, Investec, DHL, IHG Hotels & Resorts and Georgia Rugby Marketing Hub, by our official supporters, Tissot, Gilbert and Kappa, and also by our official airline partner in South Africa, Qatar Airways.

Viaplay in the UK and Ireland, beIN SPORTS and France Télévisions in France, as well as SuperSport in South Africa, will continue to provide cutting edge broadcast coverage, while S4C in Wales and FloRugby in the USA and Canada will showcase the matches to even more viewers.

To the players who make everything possible, to the staff of the competing clubs, to the match officials, to the fans, to the media and to all our stakeholders, we wish everyone a memorable EPCR Challenge Cup season.

Yours in Rugby,  
**Dominic McKay**  
**EPCR Chairman**



# STEP UP REAL RUGBY FANS

Investec      



*Barry Hughes*

# May he rest in peace

Edinburgh Rugby was saddened to learn of the recent passing of supporter Barry Hughes, who died on Saturday 24 November, aged 54.

Beloved husband to Susan, loving dad to Abbie, Lucy and Fraser and much beloved brother of Carol, Colin and Brian, Barry will be missed by all that knew him.

Originally from the Borders town of Jedburgh, Barry spent the last 20 years coaching youth rugby at Dunfermline RFC, where his love of rugby and passion for the sport was celebrated throughout the grassroots game.

An avid supporter of Edinburgh Rugby, all at the club pass on their condolences to Barry's loved ones.

May He Rest in Peace.



1872 CUP



SAT 30 DEC, 3PM  
SCOTTISH GAS MURRAYFIELD

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# TEAM LINEUPS

## EDINBURGH

*Harry Paterson* 15

*Wes Goosen* 14

*Matt Currie* 13

*James Lang* 12

*Duhan van der Merwe* 11

*Ben Healy* 10

*Ali Price* 9

*100 Pierre Schoeman* 1

*Ewan Ashman* 2

*Javan Sebastian* 3

*Glen Young* 4

*100 Grant Gilchrist (C)* 5

*100 Jamie Ritchie* 6

*100 Hamish Watson* 7

*100 Viliame Mata* 8

16. *Dave Cherry* 17. *Robin Hislop*  
18. *D'Arcy Rae* 19. *Marshall Sykes*  
20. *Luke Crosbie* 21. *Ben Vellacott*  
22. *Mark Bennett* 23. *Darcy Graham*

## BENETTON

*Geoffrey Palis*

*Nathanael Hulleu*

*Adrien Seguret*

*Andrea Cocagi*

*Antoine Bouzerand*

*Pierre Popelin*

*Gauthier Doubrere*

*Lois Guerois-Galissou*

*Pierre Colonna*

*Aurelien Azar*

*Gauthier Maravat*

*Florent Venverberghe*

*Mathieu Babillot*

*Baptiste Cope*

*Abraham Papalii*

16. *Loris Zarantonello* 17. *Wayan de Benedittis*  
18. *Wilfrid Hounkpatin* 19. *Leone Nakarawa*  
20. *Baptiste Delaporte* 21. *Jeremy Fernandez*  
22. *Vilimoni Botitu* 23. *Theo Chabouni*

# Galbraith

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# PIERRE SCHOEMAN

NO.1



# SCHOEMAN

## NO SLOWING DOWN

*Star prop Pierre Schoeman isn't someone that likes to slow down. Be that on the pitch, or away from rugby, the long-haired fan favourite only knows one-gear – and that is full speed ahead, taking on every challenge that comes his way.*

It therefore should come as no surprise that Schoeman is still feeling fresh after a demanding Rugby World Cup campaign, where he continually impressed in the number 1 shirt, before hitting the ground running with Edinburgh, where he's looked every bit the talismanic prop that the capital faithful cheer for every time he touches the ball.

Schoeman crossed the whitewash in the impressive away victory against Ulster at Kingspan Stadium before being rested for last weekend's European opener away to Clermont Auvergne.



Most would be happy with a bit of reprieve from the brutal nature of the front-row position, but not Schoeman – who, if it were up to him – would play every minute at the coalface.

“When you have momentum and are just finding your feet, playing a good game against Ulster, you want to keep going,” said Schoeman.

“But it is part of the strategy – there are a lot of games this season so if it's your turn to have a break or a rest, take your medicine and then crack on.”



Schoeman continued: “It’s a funny one. The pre-season for the World Cup was so long, your body is resilient and robust, so it recovers quickly.

“A week or two off and you are sound, ready to go, to be honest with you. Being back at the club, it’s two days of extreme hard work, long hours, a lot of meetings, pre-and reviews, but you have every Wednesday off.

“If you play away in Italy or elsewhere in the UK, you have that travelling half-day off too, so there a lot of hours off where you can recover and rest, to build up to the match and be fresh.”

With a cult like status in the capital because of his commitment to the jersey, Schoeman can now add ‘centurion’ to the long list of superlatives that describe his game.

The prop made his 100th appearance for the club in the victory over Connacht earlier this season – a milestone that moment that he was able to celebrate after a last-gasp drop goal winner from Ben Healy.

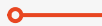
He continued: “Yeah, it was actually a cherry on the cake for me, having my 100th game for Edinburgh after the World Cup. That made it extremely special. You are just motivated to play as much as you can. Your career is only short, you want to make the best of it.

“There hasn’t really been that period of reflection after world cup. You have different goals and aspirations to work to again.

“In order to get there, you have to take the next steps, prep well and get your body and mind ready. You have to crack on.

“You want to do well for the club. They pay your wages, so you have to play for them and the fans with heart and soul and make them proud, before you have other goals and aspirations.”

One of those goals for Schoeman is undoubtedly to help his side reach the knockout stages of the EPCR Challenge Cup – which starts with securing a win against French Top 14 side Castres Olympique at Hive Stadium this Saturday.



Edinburgh are looking to bounce back from a Round 1 away defeat to Clermont Auvergne this weekend against a side that Schoeman defeated both home and away in last year's European competition.

Schoeman said: "If we finish top four, we can qualify for Europe which is massive for the club and also in the URC we want to do bloody well.

"Against Benetton we took our medicine, we learned a lot from that match regarding our penalties and turnovers. We are busy fixing it and I have confidence in that. Sean has been incredible in assisting the team to where we are and what style of rugby we play.

He added: "The individual brilliance Castres have. It's not often you see that everywhere. There's quite a few of their players who can offload in contact, take two guys out and then play the pass.

"They are resilient as well. You might break through, but they will come back charging at you relentlessly for the next five minutes, so you have to be on it for the whole 80.

"You don't want to slip up. You could be playing well, your exits are going well, but on one transition if you give them a foot in the door, they will take that opportunity."

He continued: "We know what we have to do. We have to exit properly; we know our process regarding that. But we also know when to up it a notch and go to third, fourth gear attacking-wise and [make sure we are] converting.

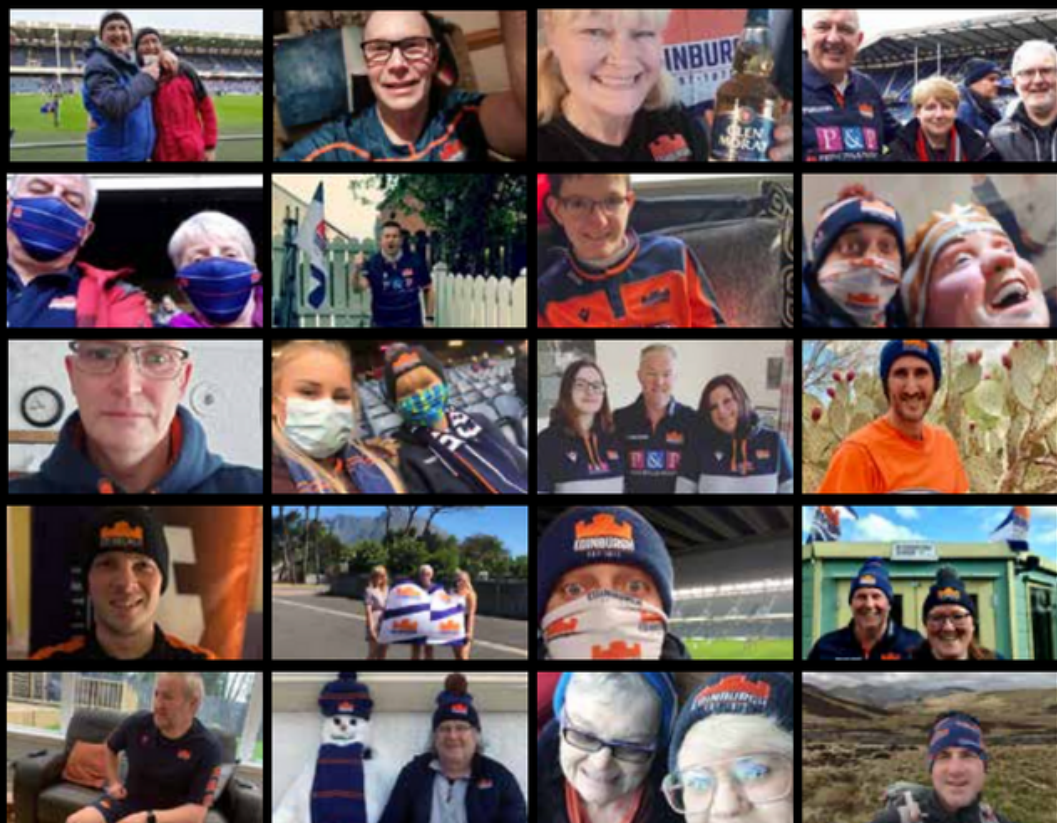
"That is what hurt us in the past, the conversion rate in the 22. If you have 10 opportunities, you have to make them count."



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## Women's Team

# CLAIRE CRUIKSHANK TO LEAD EDINBURGH RUGBY WOMEN'S TEAM

*Edinburgh Rugby this week announced Claire Cruikshank as its Women's team Head Coach, spearheading a new-look coaching team for the Celtic Challenge.*

Following the recently announced return of the Celtic Challenge, the competition confirmed its new look line-up to feature this season, which included two Scottish teams aligned to Edinburgh Rugby and Glasgow Warriors.

Cruikshank, who is Head of Performance Ladies' Rugby at Edinburgh University, will take the helm of the first-ever Edinburgh Rugby women's team, having brought a decade of success in the University game.

A former Scotland internationalist and stalwart of the women's game, 'Shanks' has international experience in a coaching capacity, both as Head Coach for the Swedish Women's National Team and as Head Coach for Scotland U20 since 2023. Cruikshank was also World Rugby Coaching Intern for Scotland Women and the 2021 Women's Rugby World Cup in New Zealand.



She will be supported by Assistant Coaches Stuart Corsar and Euan Mochrie. On the appointment, Cruikshank said: “I’m delighted to be taking on the role as Head Coach for the Edinburgh Rugby women’s team to play in the Celtic Challenge.

“Having been involved in the inaugural season last year with The Thistles I know how important this competition is for the pathway in Scotland, and we hope to be able to unearth more new talent for Scotland Women.

“The opportunity also to work alongside the existing Edinburgh Rugby programme is exciting for all the coaches, players and management.

“We’re really looking forward to the first competitive game on the 30th of December, and the fact it’s being played alongside and in tandem with the men’s 1872 Cup is super exciting.

“I hope the Edinburgh Rugby fan base comes out and supports the new women’s team at Hive Stadium.”

Edinburgh Rugby Managing Director, Douglas Struth, added: “It’s fantastic to have someone with Claire’s experience taking the lead with our women’s side.

“The excitement for their first match is growing, and I’d encourage Edinburgh Rugby fans to make it a double header by attending both matches on the 30th of December.”

Full coaching team:

**Head Coach:** Claire Cruikshank

**Team Manager:** Rosalynn Walsh

**Assistant Coach:** Stuart Corsar

**Assistant Coach:** Euan Mochrie

**Development Coach:** Andrew Whitelaw

**Development Coach:** Ross McCann



# 1872 CUP



**SAT 30 DEC, 3PM**  
SCOTTISH GAS MURRAYFIELD

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Fiona Davidson



Chris Chisholm



Fiona Mulryan



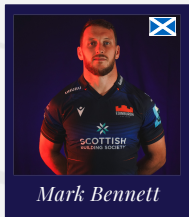
Umair Mohammed

# EDINBURGH RUGBY

## FIRST TEAM SQUAD



*Ewan Ashman*



*Mark Bennett*



*Emiliano Boffelli*

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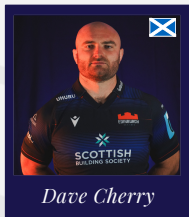


*Connor Boyle*

*Sponsor: Aitken Turnbull Architects*



*Jamie Campbell*



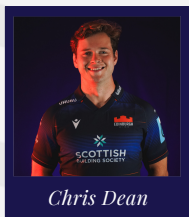
*Dave Cherry*



*Luke Crosbie*



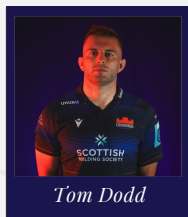
*Matt Currie*



*Chris Dean*



*Luan de Bruin*



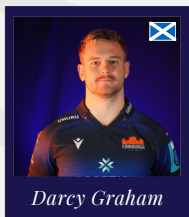
*Tom Dodd*



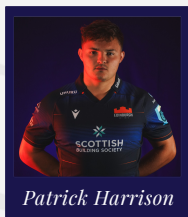
*Grant Gilchrist*



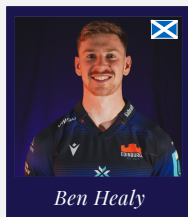
*Wes Goosen*



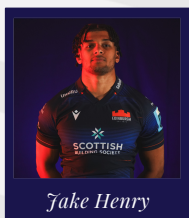
*Darcy Graham*



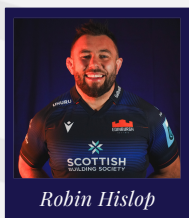
*Patrick Harrison*



*Ben Healy*



*Jake Henry*



*Robin Hislop*



*Jamie Hodgson*



*Mikey Jones*



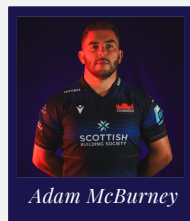
*Blair Kinghorn*



*James Lang*  
Sponsor: CBS Consulting



*Viliame Mata*



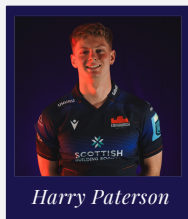
*Adam McBurney*



*Ben Muncaster*



*WP Nel*



*Harry Paterson*



*Ali Price*



*D'Arcy Rae*



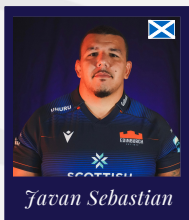
*Jamie Ritchie*



*Cammy Scott*  
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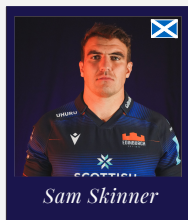
*Pierre Schoeman*



*Javan Sebastian*



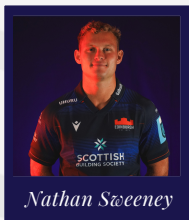
*Charlie Shiel*



*Sam Skinner*



*Scott Steele*



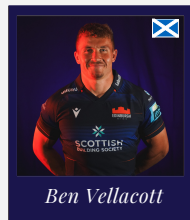
*Nathan Sweeney*



*Marshall Sykes*



*Duhan VDM*  
Sponsor: GSS Developments



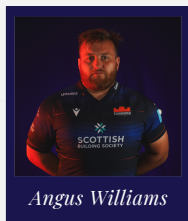
*Ben Vellacott*



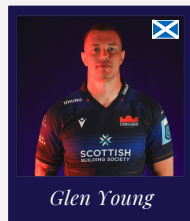
*Boan Venter*



*Hamish Watson*



*Angus Williams*



*Glen Young*

# EDINBURGH RUGBY ACADEMY 2022/23

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*Robbie Deans (Loosehead Prop)*

*Harri Morris (Hooker)*

*Jerry Blyth-Lafferty (Hooker)*

*Ollie Blyth-Lafferty (Tighthead Prop)*

*Euan McVie (Lock)*

*Tom Currie (Flanker)*

*Liam McConnell (Flanker)*

*Freddie Douglas (Flanker)*

*Ollie Duncan (Number Eight)*

*Finlay Burgess (Scrum-half)*

*Hector Patterson (Scrum-half)*

*Isaac Coates (Fly-Half)*

*Jack Hocking (Centre)*

*Finn Douglas (Wing)*

*Jack Brown (Full-Back)*



# PLAYER TRY TRACKS

---

EWAN ASHMAN	Into the Valley	Skids
MARK BENNETT	You're Welcome	Dwayne Johnson
EMILIANO BOFFELLI	Quevedo (Tries)	Bizarrap
	Pepas (Kicks)	Farruko
CONNOR BOYLE	Funky Town	Lipps Inc
JAMIE CAMPBELL	Love Tonight - Edit	Shouse
DAVE CHERRY	Boys are Back in Town	Thin Lizzy
LUKE CROSBIE	B.O.T.A	Eliza Ross, Interplanetary Criminal
MATT CURRIE	Samba de Janeiro	Bellini
LUAN DE BRUIN	Holding out for a Hero	Bonnie Tyler
CHRIS DEAN	Born to Run	Bruce Springsteen
TOM DODD	Crazy	Gnarls Barkley
JORDAN EDMUNDS	Radioactive	Imagine Dragons
GRANT GILCHRIST	Rocking All Over the World	Status Quo
WES GOOSEN	I Gotta Feeling	Black Eyed Peas
DARCY GRAHAM	Yabba Dabba Doo / CanCan	[Custom]
PADDY HARRISON	Country Roads	john Denver
BEN HEALY	Heaven is a Place on Earth	Belinda Carlisle
JAKE HENRY	<i>the</i>	<i>tbc</i>
BOMBER HISLOP	Levels	Avicii
JAMIE HODGSON	Underdog	Kasabian
MIKEY JONES	Gold Dust	DJ Fresh
BLAIR KINGHORN	Teach me how to Dougie	Cali Swag District
JAMES LANG	Hound Dog	Elvis Presley

# PLAYER TRY TRACKS

---

BILL MATA	Ukulele	Blad P2a ft. Khazin
ADAM MCBURNEY	Tell Me Ma	Sham Rock
ROSS MCCANN	The Snake	Al Wilson
BEN MUNCASTER	Crazy Frog	Axel F
CAM NEILD	<i>tbc</i>	<i>tbc</i>
WP NEL	Umfaan	Klipwerf Orkes
HARRY PATERSON	Duel of the Fates	John Williams
ALI PRICE	Believe	Cher
JAMIE RITCHIE	Seven Nation Army	White Stripes
CHARLIE SAVALA	Down Under	Men at Work
PIERRE SCHOEMAN	The Greatest Show	The Greatest Showman Ensemble
CAMMY SCOTT	Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You	Frankie Valli
JAVAN SEBASTIAN	Many Men – Album Version	50 Cent
CHARLIE SHIEL	Yes Sir, I Can Boogie	Baccara
SAM SKINNER	California Dreamin'	The Mamas & The Papas
SCOTT STEELE	Bounce	Calvin Harris
NATHAN SWEENEY	Hey Baby	DJ Otzi
TIM SWIEL	Big Seven	Burna Boy
MARSHALL SYKES	Candy Shop	50 Cent
DUHAN VD MERWE	L'Amour Toujours	Gigi D'Agostino
BEN VELLACOTT	Without Me	Eminem
BOAN VENTER	WWE: The Game	Jim Johnston
HAMISH WATSON	This is the One	Stone Roses
ANGUS WILLIAMS	Back in Black	AC/DC
GLEN YOUNG	We Like to Party	Vengaboys

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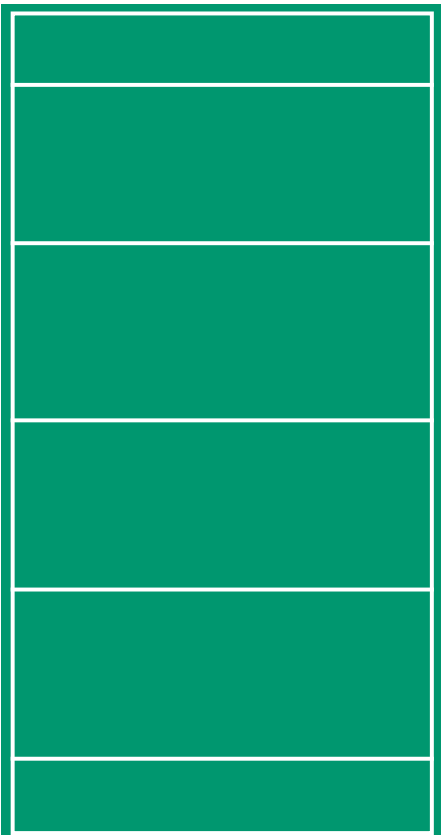


STAIR 27-32



RIVERSIDE STAND

TERRACE F / G / H



TERRACE B

TERRACE A

MURRAYFIELD STAND

STAIR 14-16



TERRACE C

TERRACE D

TERRACE E

STAIR 24-26



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# PRESS PASS

## SEAN EVERITT

### *On Clermont*

“As we can see from the results on the weekend, it is really difficult to win away from home. But it was a good experience for myself and the team, particularly some of the less experienced players – where else would they gain that experience if you are not out there playing.

“So, it is frustrating that we didn’t get the result but at the end of the day we’ve got another shot this weekend.

“It is important to win your home games in the Challenge cup, and if you win two then sometimes that is close enough to get through, but obviously we’ve got three games left so it would be great to win all three.”

### *On Darcy Graham*

“Darcy is available for selection, we just haven’t decided how we are going to use him yet.

“Darcy was one of the best wings in the World Cup so it is great to have him back and he was the top try scorer as well. He brings a wealth of experience and he certainly excites people on counter attack and that is what Castres is going to offer us.

“It is exciting for the team, it is exciting for him and he is chomping at the bit to get back on the field and me not having worked with him it is great to see him back out there.

*“It is always good to have a player as good as Darcy back and the crowd will be pleased to see him back on the field.”*



### *On Scotland internationals*

“Yes, we do have them back. It is great that we could Javan, Robin and Boan in the front-row when the internationals are away, but now those guys are looking to get back.

“I know the front-row never like having a rest because they feel they have to stay in touch with their fitnesss and conditioning, but Pierre and WP, and guys like Grant Gilchrist, Dave Cherry and Jamie Ritchie as well, bring leadership so it is great to have them back this weekend.

“Dave Cherry is also back fit which is great.”

### *On Boffelli's return*

“He has joined training this week. He's got through the unit sessions and will join the full training again on Thursday. Hopefully if there are not any hiccups during Thursday's training he will be available for selection the following week.

“He will absolutely be our 15. He is a semi-finalist in the World Cup and when he is fit he will be up for selection, and then you have an international back-three and a guy like Wes Goosen to choose from as well who has been in good form for us too.”

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— *Quick Hits*

# *Lang signs on*

I'm really excited to be part of this group for another couple of seasons. I've loved my time here. Edinburgh as a city is amazing.

"We've not achieved what we wanted the last few seasons, but with this group of players and coaches I'm excited to see where we can go and hopefully win some silverware. That was a big reason for wanting to stay here.

"I love the environment we have here as a group and I want to continue to make some great memories with my mates on and off the field."

Edinburgh Rugby Senior Coach Sean Everitt added: "James [Lang] has been one of our most consistent performers



this season. He's a quality operator in the 12 channel and provides a real mix of skill and go-forward. We're delighted to see him re-sign. James has all the talent to be a top player in this championship and someone who can challenge for more caps at international level. He's a resilient character who has shown that he can be versatile in our back-line, covering a variety of positions.

"It's brilliant to see players like James re-sign with Edinburgh. I'm sure he had no shortage of offers, so to see him extend terms for another two years showcases his commitment to the club."

# EDINBURGH RUGBY

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— *Last time out*

18 Edinburgh

31 Clermont



*Despite a second-half fightback – that saw Edinburgh score 13 unanswered points to make it 17-13 with 20 minutes remaining – a late flurry of tries from hosts Clermont saw the French Top 14 side run out deserved 31-18 winners at Stade Marcel-Michelin in the opening round of the EPCR Challenge Cup.*

The capital side were 17-3 down at the break. Tim Swiel's late penalty added the only points for the visitors who battled well in the opening 40, but failed to turn pressure or prime attacking opportunities into any scores.

Sean Everitt's side returned to the field following the break with renewed vigour and when Javan Sebastian powered over with just 42 minutes on the clock – momentum had swung in Edinburgh's favour.

A Cammy Scott penalty on 59 minutes made it just a four-point game (17-13) however that was as close as Edinburgh would get to Clermont, whose replacements added further firepower to close out the match with two well-taken scores.

Reacting to the defeat, Edinburgh Rugby Senior Coach, Sean Everitt, said: “I’m proud of the effort from the boys throughout the game. At half-time, we knew we had to stay in the fight.

“I think we did that and we responded well, but Clermont won some of the small moments in the game.

“They dominated us at scrum time. We gave away four or five scrum penalties. That’s too many.

“They won the battle in the air with the kicking. We’ve got to be better at that.

“Clermont emptied their bench in the second half and they made a good impact. They changed the game.

“We were getting on top at that stage, but then we conceded some penalties, missed a kick to touch and put ourselves under pressure.

He added: “It was good to play in front of a big crowd. We’ve got some good experience because we had some youngsters in the team.”



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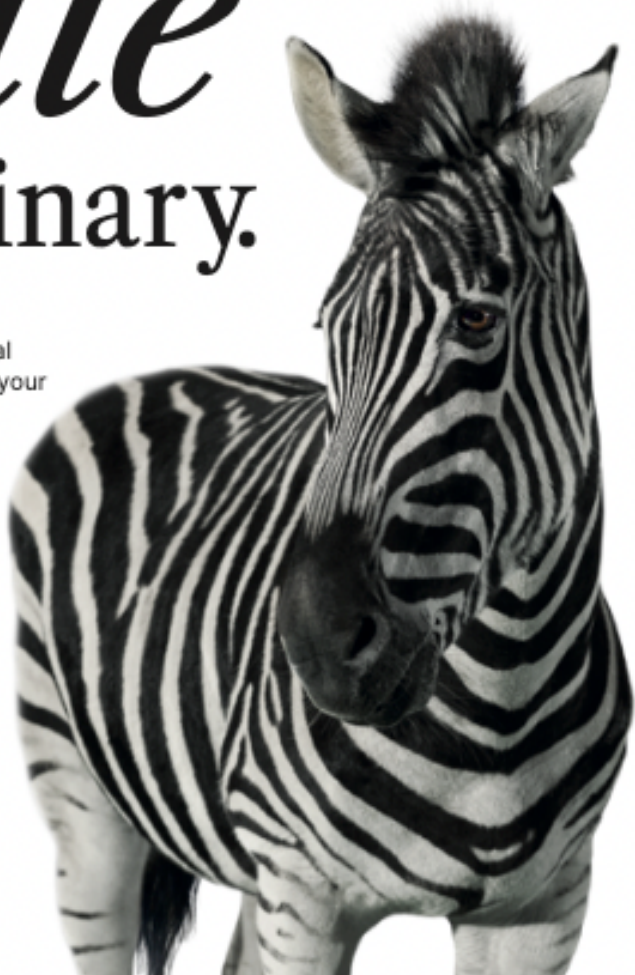


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