

MUNSTER 28-14 EDINBURGH (21.02.2009)

Saturday, 21 February 2009

Edinburgh battled bravely in Cork and scored two impressive tries at the home of the European champions, but it was not enough to prevent league leaders Munster from winning 28-14 at Musgrave Park.

With three players in the squad all making their debuts in the Black and Red, Edinburgh went into the game with the odds stacked against them and conceded an early try when former All Black Doug Howlett broke through two tackles to touch down in the corner.

But Ben Cairns punched a hole in Munster's defence, following enterprising play off the back of a line-out, to stroll through unchallenged and put Edinburgh back on level terms minutes later.

The scoreline remained the same until eight minutes before the break when prop Tony Buckley was judged to have scored. After the interval, Munster cranked up the pressure and exploited some uncharacteristic errors in defence to score tries through Keith Earls and Ciaran O'Boyle before a David Blair break from midfield was finished off by Chris Paterson.

Paterson contributed nine points on the night taking his total for the season past the 100-point mark, but the nation's record points scorer will have been kicking himself after his impeccable kicking record came to an end when he missed a second half penalty.

Some positives emerged from the match, most notably the performance of Blair at stand-off and the debuts of Ryan Grant, Bruce McNeil and Scott MacLeod, but it was a frustrating evening's work in the south of Ireland for Edinburgh, who must now regroup in time for the trip to Scarlets on Sunday 8 March.

Edinburgh remain in fifth place in the Magners League standings, 10 points behind league leaders Munster.

Munster: D Hurley; D Howlett, K Earls, L Mafi, C O'Boyle; P Warwick, P Stringer; F Pucciariello, D Fogarty, T Buckley, M O'Driscoll, A Quinlan, D Leamy, N Ronan, N Williams.

Edinburgh: C Paterson, A Turnbull (Reid), B Cairns, N De Luca, M Robertson (Thompson), D Blair, G Laidlaw (Meyer), K Traynor (McNeil), A Kelly (Lawrie), R Grant, C Hamilton (MacLeod), B Gissing, S Cross (Newlands), A MacDonald, A Hogg (capt)