

SAMSON FORECASTS TOUGH CHALLENGE FOR GAEL FORCE

Wednesday, 10 March 2010

Ross Samson has been handed the number nine jersey for Gael Force in this evening's British and Irish Cup match against Leinster at Stirling County's Bridgehaugh ground (10 March, kick off 7pm, free admission) and the promising scrum half says he expects a difficult test.

The 22-year-old, who made his Edinburgh debut at Bath in December, will line up alongside Davie Young, Sean Crombie and Fraser McKenzie for The Force and he believes Leinster's reserve squad will be tough opponents.

Samson said: "We've played Leinster's first team before in the Magners League and we narrowly lost, so we know a lot about them.

"I imagine their back-up team will play a similar brand of rugby and have the same calls. I guess a lot of the guys who will be playing for them will be full-time players, so it will be a pretty big challenge for the boys.

"The gulf between Premier One and British and Irish Cup is pretty big and then there is another massive jump between that tournament and what is required for the Magners League.

"Playing against Leinster will probably be the toughest opponent in the British and Irish Cup and the closest to playing in a Magners League back-up fixture. Hopefully it will open up some of the boys' eyes and enable them to step up."

Samson recorded his first start for Edinburgh against Glasgow in the 1872 Cup in front of a bumper Murrayfield crowd and says he enjoyed the experience, despite the result.

Now with both Mike Blair and Greig Laidlaw fully fit, Samson acknowledges it will be difficult for him to get on the pitch, but stresses if he performs well enough away from Edinburgh then head coach Rob Moffat will be forced to consider him for selection.

He added: "I was pleased that I got my first start and to play in such a high profile match was a bonus.

"I really enjoyed the experience. Now Moff (Rob Moffat) is spoilt for choice in terms of which scrum half to pick because we've got Mike and Greig available at the moment.

"There is not much I can do about selection – I've just got to keep playing well whenever I'm selected for Gael Force or playing for Edinburgh Accies."