

Edinburgh Academicals v Selkirk

EDINBURGH ACCIES did just enough to clinch a play-off spot in a game that hung in the balance right to the final whistle. Selkirk will rue a slow start, but more importantly a loss of discipline that saw the referee flourish the yellow card three times, as well as twice marching the Borderers back for dissent and reversing one penalty that might have provided the match winning opportunity.

Home coach **Iain Berthinussen** admitted that a low-key performance could easily have cost Accies the win, and he expressed his relief at the outcome.

“I thought the first 38 minutes of the game we were fairly dominant but we just didn’t turn that pressure into points,” he said. “We probably got a bit lacklustre in all honestly then we gave them a foothold into the game at 12-7 at half time then 12-10. Our discipline just capitulated over a 25 minute period. We gave away four penalties in the first half and eight in the second half.”

And of the result that means Accies won’t finish outside the top four, he added: “I don’t know how we won that because we didn’t play very well. But we won it, so we’ll take that. We have to keep winning and try to get some momentum.”

His Selkirk counterpart **Scott Wight** bemoaned the slow start, and acknowledged the impact of a lack of discipline that meant his side played for half an hour with only 14 men.

“We had chances at the end to win it. We’ve just said that if we could implement how we played the last ten minutes the score line wouldn’t have been as close. The most frustrating thing is that we just kind of paddled about for 50 minutes then came up short”, he said, before admitting that the loss of composure has jeopardised the chances of featuring in the knock-out phase.



“Discipline is a non-negotiable – we can’t be speaking back to refs to get penalties reversed. We have to learn and we’ve got to move on but obviously we’re running out of games to make the top four.”

Having comfortably absorbed the home side’s efforts in the opening minutes, Selkirk had their first incursion into opposition territory when **Craig Jackson** burst clear. The centre was also prominent in the next attack before blotting his copybook in an otherwise impressive performance with a no-arms tackle that earned him a yellow-card.

In his absence, Accies took the lead when they opted for a scrum from a close-range penalty award and a powerful surge created the space for **Ruari Campbell** to plunge over.

Selkirk responded well but a knock-on just shy of the line thwarted their hopes of an immediate response. And things got worse for the Borderers after a series of penalties led to a second yellow of the afternoon, this time for **Scott McClymont**.

Again the hosts capitalised on the extra man, with **Jamie Loomes** freeing **Max Wallace** for a try before adding the extras.

McClymont returned to the fray just before half-time and he atoned for his earlier misdemeanour when he gathered at a line-out and sparked a series of drives that ended with **James Bett** emerging from a pile of bodies with five points to his credit. Jackson banged over the conversion from wide on the left to leave the deficit at five points after a lively first half.



A sprightly start to the second period yielded a penalty for Selkirk in front of the posts, and Jackson stroked over the kick. Then he edged the visitors into the lead after 53 minutes when he thumped over a long-range effort.

Accies responded with a spell of sustained pressure that produced a string of penalty awards. They opted for the scrum each time but squandered the opportunity to score and offended at the breakdown to hand Selkirk a simple escape in what looked as if it may be a pivotal moment with 15 minutes left to play. And that appeared to be the case as the clock ticked towards full-time.

However, Selkirk contrived to lose the match. The first example of the indiscipline that would prove costly came in 77 minutes when a scrum penalty to Accies just inside the visitors' half was advanced for some back chat, bringing it within the range of Loomes. He duly bagged the three points to nudge the hosts in front once more.

Jackson had a chance to snatch back the lead but pushed a 40 metre penalty narrowly wide of the target before tugging another effort left from a similar distance. And he was deprived of a third attempt from closer range after the referee overturned a Selkirk penalty for more chat to the officials. And the disciplinary meltdown ended when the Borderers were penalised once more and **Aaron McColm** became the third player to see yellow after he offered an unwanted opinion to the referee. That enabled Accies to see out the remaining seconds to secure the victory.

Teams –

Edinburgh Accies: B Appleson; K Gossman, M Wallace, N Armstrong, L Wells; J Loomes©, S Broad; C Imrie, F McAslan, C Lacour, J Mills, R Thompson, T Drennan, J Sole, R Campbell. Subs: C Taylor, G Ratcliff, C Bain, M Love, V Hart.

Selkirk: R Cottrell; L Ferguson, C Easson, C Jackson, J Welsh; Aaron McColm©, E McVicar; C Mackintosh, J Bett, Z Szwagrzak, A Cochrane, C Turnbull, R Nixon, S McClymont, Andrew McColm. Subs: K Thomson, B Riddell, C Ward, J Hamilton.

Report by The Offside Line

Photos by Grant Kinghorn