

# THE YELLOW RIBBON

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB E-NEWSLETTER



## Welcome!

**TOM FAWCETT, EURFC ALUMNI SECRETARY**

Hello and welcome to the 2021-2022 season halfway EURFC Alumni Newsletter!

With great upset of our club not being able to have our annual dinner yet this year, due to the ongoing pandemic, we thought we would connect with our fantastic Alumni again through our wonderful digital magazine, The Yellow Ribbon. My thanks must go out to my predecessor Luke Cullen for initially founding this now virtual traditional update. Please look out for further in-person alumni opportunities in the coming months.

In this edition, we get updates from the President of the club, and gain current mid-season updates from your 1st XV through to 4th XV, to give you an inside perspective throughout the whole of EURFC.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

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- HALF-WAY REPORTS FROM EACH TEAM



# President Update

## BEN HEBER, EURFC PRESIDENT

Seasons greetings and Happy New Year from everyone here at EURFC! For those of whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Ben, and I am the Club Captain/President of EURFC for the 2021/2022 season. I am in my fourth and final year at the university and this is my second year on the committee, having previously served as Kit Secretary.

Following the difficulties felt from the pandemic last year, the first semester has seen the EURFC go from strength to strength. The start of the season was a huge success as we welcomed over 100 boys to futures trials during the first week. Our futures programme has again epitomised about what being a member of EURFC is all about. Many of the second-year boys, who were unable to take part in any rugby last year, must be commended for their buy in to the programme. A massive thank you must also go to Gavin Macrae who heads the futures, and to our student coaches who sacrifice their time to help create a welcoming atmosphere.

This semester has also seen the return of our Intramural Side, appropriately named the "Raw Dogs". This social team provides an opportunity for boys who are unable to regularly train due to university commitments. We have seen the fairy tale return to rugby for some of the senior boys, as well as some new faces getting their opportunity.

The 1st and 2nd XV have also had a solid start to the season despite some results perhaps not quite going our way. We have been lucky enough to have three new coaches this year. Matt Campbell, Jonny Jones, and Will Stephen, have all been instrumental in the development of the players, instilling their wisdom as well as creating entertaining sessions. Another big thank you must go to our Head of Rugby, Dave Adamson, and Assistant Coach, Luis Ariola who continue to work exceptionally hard with the boys and have finally been able to see rewards reaped out on the hallowed (artificial) turf of Peffermill.

The social side of the club has also been busy. At the start of the semester the boys undertook several welfare workshops which were run by an external company named, "Beyond Equality". Some challenging topics of conversion ensued, and some testing questions were asked, providing a stimulating experience for the boys. The mental wellbeing of our members is a top priority and through working closely with our welfare secretary, James Nelson, we strive to make sure there is always a point of contact for someone who is struggling with the pressures of university life.

Flourishing new sponsorship deals have been signed with, "Pilgrim" and "Why Not" which have provided the boys with endless amusement on a Wednesday night.

Charitable work has once again been at the forefront of our agenda. We continue to partner with CHAS (Children's Hospices Across Scotland), and we have formed a new partnership with "Mary's Meals", a charity that provides chronically hungry children with one school meal every day. Major fundraising events our set to take place next semester, but so far several boys from EURFC took part in a challenging ten kilometre run to help raise funds.

Congratulations to James Nelson, Harry Hitchens, and Nicholas Brimacombe, who all receive their red ties as recognition for their service to EURFC.

We look forward to welcoming back the boys for a busy second semester,

Yours in Rugby,

Ben Heber (Brock)  
President of EURFC



A special mention must also be given to our committee members this year. Without their time and effort towards the club, EURFC simply wouldn't run.

Club President - Ben Heber  
Vice President - Guy Jones  
Club Treasurer - Harry Hitchens  
Alumni Secretary - Tom Fawcett  
Welfare Secretary - James Nelson  
Sponsorship Secretary - Robbie Simmers  
Ordinary Member - Nicholas Brimacombe  
Media Secretary - Barney May  
Social Secretary - George Davies  
Kit Secretaryies - Ben Snaithe & Ben Brannan

I extend my thanks from the whole club to all committee members for all that they have done and know their commitment will continue for the remainder of their term of office. Thank you.



EURFC legend Michael Diegnan (right) overlooking pre-season fixture.

# FIRST XV UPDATE

**TOM FAWCETT**

**EURFC 1ST XV CAPTAIN**

Following an industrious preseason, the 1st XV were excited for the upcoming season having got themselves in both a mentally and physically strong position to target a top table positioning in their league, North A Division.

However, the squad had to first learn several invaluable lessons in an 'unofficial varsity' fixture away against St. Andrews 1st XV. An attritional game for the young Edinburgh side saw the home side victorious, 18-5; yet ability and character within the squad showed great promise for the season ahead. The whole club look forward to the hopeful return of an official post-pandemic varsity fixture next season.

As always, home games at BT Peffermill are always fiercely contested. Still under the leadership of Head Coach Dave Adamson, the 1st strive to play an expansive still of free-flowing, 'heads-up' rugby, coupled with the infamous Edinburgh winds, provide for entertaining fixtures for our supporting crowd to and for which we must thank! Some impressive home wins must be highlighted, including the monumental 58-0 victory over Leeds Becket 2nd XV, and the 23-14 triumph over Leeds University 1st XV. This relentless form continued going into a crucial midtable clash against Birmingham 1st XV. The visitors stunned the squad with an early try and placing Edinburgh on the back foot. From then the 1st XV produced a clinical first half display with the forwards dominant throughout set-piece, thanks goes here to coach Luis Arola, seeing the forwards and backs linking up to score some unforgettable team tries. The visitors did not give up easily, however, fighting back and ensuring Edinburgh earned the victory, coming out on top 27-7 at the final whistle.

The away trips have been slightly more challenging. Required to travel to the likes of, Nottingham 1st XV, and Nottingham Trent 1st XV, Birmingham 1st XV to name just a few, demands great dedication and focus for the whole squad. Frustratingly, the 1st XV have been on the wrong side of the results with a number of these encounters. The last game of Semester 1 saw the 1st XV away to Durham 2nd XV in a crunching game in challenging conditions. Trading points throughout the game saw a close encounter and a nail-biting finish. Despite an unluckily ending in a narrow 25-24 loss, the 1st XV played some fantastic rugby and huge admiration goes to several of the younger 'Futures Players' stepping up, credit to the development programme and depth within the club. The squad look forward to taking that mindset and energy into the remainder of the fixtures. Being the only Scottish team in the league and unavoidably having to travel comparatively long distances, sometimes for days at a time, can be challenging. However all this provides the squad a unique opportunity to bond further off as well as on the field, building friendships that go beyond just the team itself.

The First XV's abilities have grown every game, constantly developing an expansive style rugby to couple a forceful defensive shape. When complete attacking and defensive performances are achieved this squad is simply unstoppable. At the end of Semester 1 the squad find themselves placed at 6th in the league table with 4 competitive games remaining. The boys look forward to targeting the last 2 home fixtures against Nottingham 1st and Newcastle 1st to try climb up the table. The First XV are in a strong position with an exciting remainder of the season ahead, and a team I have full confidence can deliver the results they truly deserve.

Tom Fawcett  
First XV Captain



## ALUMNI UPDATE

### THANK YOU!

This year has been another challenging year, thus far, in order to connect with our Alumni. With the annual Alumni Dinner no longer going forward, due to the pandemic, EURFC are looking into future dates to rearrange a similar event. Please keep an eye out for details in the upcoming weeks.

We would also like to hear from you! EURFC are looking to create a better connected Alumni, sharing your success (rugby & non-rugby related) with the rest of our club. Please send in anything exciting so we can celebrate your news with both current and past club members! Please get in touch so we can include your stories in future newsletters.

[eurfc alumni@gmail.com](mailto:eurfc alumni@gmail.com)

Finally, we would like to thank you for all donations towards to club to date. This year you have significantly helped the club post-pandemic after upsettingly losing a number of sponsors, and also contributed to additional coaching staff. With your financial support we have seen the growth of our club in both participation and success, all teams producing some of the best match results seen in club history.

I would like to once again encourage you to consider the club going into 2022, it is greatly appreciated. Without the generosity of our fellow Alumni EURFC wouldn't be capable of achieving many of the successes we currently do. Information on our alumni fund can be found on our website under the 'Alumni' tab.

Tom Fawcett  
Alumni Secretary

# SECOND XV UPDATE

**GUY JONES**

**EURFC 2ND XV CAPTAIN**

After a frustrating year of COVID this season has allowed the return to competitive rugby and provided the opportunity to blood the fresh crop of Edinburgh students for the 2nd XV in the Scottish Tier 1 League. The first game took the 2nd XV to Heriot Watt for the Edinburgh derby which saw a well-fought 25-21 win, setting the campaign off to the best possible start. The following week the squad ventured North to meet Stirling 1st XV under the watchful eye of William Wallace. Unfortunately, a close encounter saw the 2nd XV unable to fight Stirling or the weather with the same resistance as Wallace, leading to a 28-19 loss, however the bus journey home proved to be a great success. A spirited 17-17 draw with Aberdeen 1st XV and completing the double over Heriot Watt 1st XV with a 22-20 win, the boys had their tails up and were really getting into their stride. This was proven by an emphatic 28-19 win against Stirling at home, sealed by the squad's trademark courageous running rugby and robust defence that is becoming typical of this side. A final game loss to St. Andrews First XV sees the 2nd XV sat at 3rd in the league with 4 games to play. Outside of the league the 2nd XV travelled to Glasgow to play their 1st XV in the National Trophy. Playing away and against a side in the league above us placed Edinburgh as firm underdogs. In a tense encounter the scores were level with no time on the clock. As the away side a draw is all that's required to progress to the next round, yet, keeping the ball in play saw the squad bundled over to win the game outright 33-40. This encapsulates the self-belief and persistent fighting attitude that we have seen so much from the players this year.



The culture, enjoyment and environment that we have in this squad is something I have not experienced in previous years; the standard is getting driven higher and higher as young boys push through to claim 1st XV appearances and players from the futures set-up fit seamlessly into the side. Off the field we have continued this success by retaining the title of EURFC Boat Race champions and have been able to get back to our social events such as Tways Christmas BBQ and Rugby Ball. Next semester the 2nd XV look to our next cup game across the border against Sheffield, alongside the remaining 4 league games to climb up the league table. A realistic target for this squad is promotion in the next 3 years, and if the squad maintain this trajectory, it may not even take that long!

Up the Tways.

Guy Jones

Second XV Captain

# THIRD & FOURTH XV UPDATE

**FIN MCCARTNEY**

**FUTURERS PLAYER-COACH**

Since the September trials of over 150 boys, to our first training session with around 120 boys fighting for the 3rd XV, 4th XV and the new Social Team positions. The Futures have provided the club with an influx of real talent, laughter, and sporting commitment.

Since preseason the Futures have shown great promise. The competitive nature of these teams has driven great success to date, with the 3rd XV becoming a prized team to play for within the club. Following the conclusion of Semester 1, one can see that the results certainly speak for themselves with many lessons learnt along the way, both on and off the field. The first game of the season demonstrated the talent in the new league and the required standards, following the promotion to Scottish Tier 2 league. The first game of the season saw the team go down 30-0 at halftime against a well drilled Dundee 1st XV, however, digging deep the team showed great spirit playing some fantastic free-flowing rugby to score 4 tries in the 2nd half, despite coming out on the losing side (42-24). With growing motivation and commitment from the players, coupled with the targeted training plans set by Gavin MacRae and Fin Anderson, followed some impressive results. The squad produced a 31-19 win over Robert Gordons 1st XV, an exquisite 78-15 rivalry victory over Aberdeen 2nd XV, and potentially the most memorable win against Strathclyde 2nd XV match. Challenging Scottish conditions at BT Peffermill set the stage for an attritional game of tight margins, winning just 8-7 through a late slotted penalty. Highlighting one performance throughout the whole club fixtures thus far which successfully displays the EURFC core values would be the 3rd XV away clash against Dundee 1st XV. One of the greatest comebacks in club history as the squad win in the closing moments of the game after going 35-0 down. A truly magnificent result. The season thus far has shown that the 3rd XV undoubtedly have the raw ability and drive to win not only the league, but the Scottish Conference Cup also. The squad look forward to the opening games of 2022 facing Edinburgh Napier 1st XV back-to-back in the cup and league.

Following the 3rd XV, the mighty 4th XV equally had a pool of over 2 teams worth of boys to filter through and develop their skills from the outset of Semester 1. The squad deservingly find themselves leading the Scottish Tier 4 league at the Christmas break. This has come through hard fought wins over Stirling 2nd XV and Strathclyde 3rd XV, and some shows of absolute class with a 78-0 over local rivals Edinburgh Napier 2nd XV, and 59-3 win over Heriot Watt 3rd XV. As a result of their hard work, especially for a lot of boys transitioning from schoolboy to university rugby's physicality and mentality, it has meant thus far only losing 2 games of very narrow margins. Alongside the teams less experienced boys, credit goes out to player managed set of 3rd years stepping up in the club and for the 4th XV, acting as players, captains and away day managers. The atmosphere created in this squad has aided not just the development of committed rugby players, but also the foundations of tight friendships that are able to enjoy the Wednesday Socials like never before.

Flin McCartney

Futures player-coach