

= Cardiff Blues vs Leicester Tigers (2008 ? 09 Heineken Cup) =

The second semi @-@ final of the 2008 ? 09 Heineken Cup , the premier European club rugby union competition , saw Cardiff Blues take on Leicester Tigers at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on 3 May 2009 . The scores were level after regular time and neither team was able to score during extra time , resulting in the first ever penalty shoot @-@ out in a professional rugby match . Both teams missed one of their first five kicks , taking the shoot @-@ out to sudden death . Both teams were successful with their kicks in the first two rounds of sudden death , before Martyn Williams missed Cardiff 's eighth kick allowing Jordan Crane to hit the winner .

In regular time , Cardiff took an early lead with a penalty before Leicester 's Scott Hamilton scored a converted try and they kicked another penalty . Cardiff scored three further penalties to put them back into the lead , before another successful penalty by Leicester gave them a one @-@ point lead going into half @-@ time . Early in the second half , Geordan Murphy scored another try for Leicester , which again was converted and kicked two more penalties to extend their lead to 26 ? 12 with 20 minutes remaining . Leicester then had two players sent to the sin bin , and Cardiff scored two tries in the last 10 minutes of regular time , first by Jamie Roberts and then Tom James , with both conversions successful to bring the scores level at 26 ? 26 and take the game into extra time .

Following the match , there was criticism of the format used for the penalty shoot @-@ out , specifically the way that the game was decided by kicks at goal attempted by players who wouldn 't ordinarily kick the ball during a rugby match . One journalist commented that was a " ludicrous " way of deciding a game , while another believed it had turned the semi @-@ final into a " pantomime " and was an " unnecessarily demeaning way " of deciding a winner . A review was promised by tournament organisers , and changes were made to the format ahead of the following season 's tournament , though no other Heineken Cup match ever needed to be decided by a penalty shoot @-@ out .

= = Background = =

Cardiff Blues had been the only team to finish the pool stage of the Heineken Cup unbeaten during the 2008 ? 09 season , which saw them given top seeding for the quarter @-@ finals . This meant that they would have a home quarter @-@ final against the second @-@ best runners @-@ up from the pool stage , Toulouse . Cardiff won the quarter @-@ final 9 ? 6 .

Leicester lost two games during the pool stage , but amassed sufficient points to finish as the top side in the pool and to be seeded fourth , which meant they were given the last of the home draws against the fifth @-@ seeded side , Bath . Leicester beat Bath 20 ? 15 to reach the semi @-@ final .

In a draw made prior to the quarter @-@ finals , it was determined that the winner of the match between Cardiff and Toulouse would have home country advantage , meaning that they could choose any venue in their own country for the semi @-@ finals , provided it was not their designated home ground . The winner of the match between Leicester and Bath was drawn against them as the away team . Cardiff elected to stage the game at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff , which is located adjacent to their usual Cardiff Arms Park ground and has a much larger capacity of 74 @, @ 500 , compared to the 12 @, @ 500 capacity of the Arms Park . Cardiff had already moved their quarter @-@ final game against Toulouse to the Millennium Stadium , despite being able to use their own ground at that stage of the competition , to take advantage of the increased capacity .

= = Regular time = =

Cardiff suffered an early setback when their captain , Paul Tito , was injured after nine minutes and had to be replaced . Ben Blair gave Cardiff the lead with a penalty kick before the 15 @-@ minute mark , but Leicester were then awarded three penalties in quick succession due to infringements by Cardiff . For each , Julien Dupuy elected to attempt a kick at goal , but was unsuccessful with all three attempts . Leicester 's first score came in the form of a try from Scott Hamilton after 21

minutes , following a line break by Toby Flood , who then drew two defenders towards him before passing the ball to Hamilton . The try was converted by Dupuy , and a successful Dupuy penalty kick on 24 minutes made the score 10 ? 3 to Leicester . Cardiff hit back with three successful penalty kicks of their own , one from Blair and two from Leigh Halfpenny , before Dupuy successfully kicked another penalty just before half @-@ time to give Leicester a 13 ? 12 lead at the break .

After half @-@ time , Leicester increased their lead with a converted try from Geordan Murphy after 45 minutes and two more penalties from Dupuy extended Leicester 's lead further to 26 ? 12 going into the last 20 minutes . Flood left the field due to an injury and was replaced by Aaron Mauger . Leicester then had two players sent to the sin bin in quick succession . First , Craig Newby was shown a yellow card on 62 minutes for killing the ball during a Cardiff attack , and then Geordan Murphy was shown a yellow card on 68 minutes for what was adjudged to be a deliberate knock @-@ on during another Cardiff attack . Leicester did not concede during Newby 's absence , but shortly after his return and with Murphy still off the pitch in the sin bin , Cardiff 's Jamie Roberts scored a try with Ben Blair successfully kicking the conversion from within five metres of the touchline . At the restart , Cardiff gathered the ball and Roberts made a break from within 22 metres of Cardiff 's own goal line before passing to Tom James , who ran 60 metres to score a try in almost exactly the same place as Roberts . Blair again kicked the conversion from the touchline to tie the scores at 26 ? 26 with three minutes remaining . With no further scores , the match went into extra time .

= = Extra time = =

This was the second occasion a Heineken Cup semi @-@ final match had gone to extra time ? it had only previously been required in the match between Toulouse and Brive in 1998 . Extra time consisted of two halves of 10 minutes each . A winner would be decided only if one team 's score was higher than the other at the end of extra time , not by the " first to score " system used in some other sports . The rules also provided a tiebreaker if the scores were level after extra time ; the team that had scored the most tries in the match would be the winner . In the event , neither team made any score during extra time , and both had scored the same number of tries during the match , which meant that the match would be decided by a penalty shoot @-@ out , the first time such an occurrence had happened in a professional rugby match .

In the final minute of extra time , Leicester medical staff indicated they needed to make a blood injury replacement for Dan Hipkiss , and elected to bring Julien Dupuy , who had been substituted in the last 10 minutes of regular time , back onto the field as the replacement . The match officials requested the Leicester physiotherapist demonstrate an open wound by wiping the blood from the cut , and satisfied the injury was legitimate , allowed the replacement . With the penalty shoot @-@ out approaching , Cardiff decided to use a substitution to bring Ceri Sweeney , an experienced goal @-@ kicker , onto the field in place of Jamie Roberts .

= = Penalty shoot @-@ out = =

The rarity of a penalty shoot @-@ out in rugby meant that no standard format existed and tournament organisers were left to devise their own rules on the format a shoot @-@ out would take in the event it was required , such as the positions the kicks would be taken from , the type of kick used and the number and order of players who would participate . In the case of the Heineken Cup , the rules set by organisers European Rugby Cup (ERC) prescribed a format closely resembling that used in soccer matches . Each team would alternately take five place kicks , each from the same position on the 22 @-@ metre line , directly in front of the posts . Each kick had to be taken by a different player from the 15 players that were present on the pitch at the end of extra time . In the event the scores were level after the five kicks , " sudden death " would take place , with each team alternately taking a kick until a round occurred where one team was successful with their kick and the other team missed . Again , each kick was required to be taken by a different player , starting with players that had yet to take a kick in the first part of the shoot @-@ out . If no winner had been

decided after all 15 players had attempted a kick , the process would continue with each player eligible to take a kick again until all 15 players had made another attempt .

Cardiff won the coin toss and elected to kick first . Ben Blair and Julien Dupuy , the goal @-@ kickers used during the match were the first to attempt kicks for their respective sides , were both successful . The teams then nominated other players on their team who had experience at goal @-@ kicking , both teams being successful with their second and third kicks . Cardiff 's fourth player Ceri Sweeney , was also an experienced goal @-@ kicker and was successful ; however , Leicester selected Johnie Murphy , who was not a regular kicker , and he missed to make the score 4 ? 3 after four of the five rounds . This meant if Cardiff were successful with their next kick , they would have an unassailable lead and would win the match . With no more experienced goal kickers to choose from , winger Tom James stepped up to take the kick , but missed , allowing Leicester the chance to draw level . Scott Hamilton scored with his kick to bring the scores to 4 ? 4 after five kicks and take the shoot @-@ out to sudden death . The teams were both successful with their next two kicks , including Craig Newby for Leicester who was the first forward to take a kick in the shoot @-@ out . With all seven backs having already attempted a kick , Cardiff were required to select a forward player for their eighth kick , and chose flanker Martyn Williams . He missed , giving Leicester the chance to win the match if they were successful with their eighth kick . Number 8 Jordan Crane was selected for the attempt and was successful , resulting in Leicester winning the shoot @-@ out 7 ? 6 and advancing to the 2009 Heineken Cup Final .

= = Match details = =

= = Post @-@ match reaction = =

Martyn Williams remained in the dressing room for 90 minutes after the game , and when he emerged opted not to speak to the media . He later did give his reaction , expressing his opinion that the format was a bit of a lottery and observed " somebody was going to miss ? I 've just got to live with the fact that it was me . " He also credited several of the victorious Leicester players who had commiserated with him after the game and others who had sent messages of support to him . Jordan Crane said after the match that he had felt calm prior to taking his kick , as Williams ' miss meant that in the event Crane also missed , the scores would remain level and sudden death would continue . Tom James who had missed a kick earlier in the shoot @-@ out which would have won the match for Cardiff said that " gutted is the only word that properly describes how I am feeling " .

A number of outlets expressed disappointment at the penalty shoot @-@ out , in particular the way that Martyn Williams , who as a flanker who would not ordinarily take a kick at goal , had been to " blame " for Cardiff 's loss . The Guardian 's Paul Rees expressed the opinion that asking forwards to take kicks at goal " is demanding something not only unnatural but untried and it turned a rousing semi @-@ final into a pantomime , an unnecessarily demeaning way of settling the issue . " Brendan Gallagher writing in The Daily Telegraph noted that only three or four players on a rugby team would kick the ball during a match in a meaningful way , and said it was " ludicrous that a game should be decided by emphasising that particular skill " . He also questioned what would have happened in the event the shoot @-@ out continued and the game been decided between props Martin Castrogiovanni and Gethin Jenkins , both considered amongst the finest players in their position but never ordinarily being required to kick the ball at goal . Chris Hewett expressed similar views in The Independent , observing that Martyn Williams " lost the game by failing to perform a task outside the skill @-@ set of the majority of players " and commenting that " short of asking a cat to bark , it is hard to imagine anything more preposterous . "

In light of the criticism , tournament organisers ERC agreed to review the penalty shoot @-@ out system , although they confirmed that they had already considered and dismissed some other possible ways of deciding matches , including replaying the game , having a ' next try wins ' rule in extra time , reducing the number of players on the pitch periodically in extra time to create more space and deciding the game on a coin toss . The format for the penalty shoot @-@ out was

changed prior to the following season 's tournament , removing the requirement for all players on the field (including forwards) to participate , however for the remainder of its existence , the Heineken Cup retained the penalty shoot @-@ out as the final system for deciding a winner if required . No other Heineken Cup match needed to use it .

In August 2009 , Martin Offiah , who was working as a pundit for broadcaster Sky Sports during the match , spoke to the News of the World , stating that he believed the blood replacement in the final minute of extra time where Julien Dupuy returned to the field " looked very suspicious and , in light of what happened in the previous round with Harlequins , I think Hipkiss and Leicester should be called to question . " Leicester coach Richard Cockerill responded that the replacement was within the laws of the game and that the club had done nothing illegal . ERC confirmed that the match commissioner had spoken to the referee regarding the incident and on the basis that the referee was satisfied , no further action was required . Cardiff also confirmed that they were satisfied that no wrongdoing had taken place and would not seek any further action .