



Raeburn Place, Edinburgh  
5<sup>th</sup> May 2010

## **Edinburgh Accies Appoint Simon Cross as Head Coach**

Edinburgh Accies are pleased to announce the appointment of Simon Cross as the new Head Coach at Raeburn Place.

Cross, who has been Edinburgh Rugby's club captain for much of the last 8 years, has just announced his retirement from playing rugby. The flank forward's knee injuries over the past couple of seasons have contributed to his decision to stop playing at the relatively early age of 29. However, he has always stated his intention to continue his career in rugby through coaching.

Speaking of his new role as Edinburgh Accies' Head Coach, which he takes up with immediate effect, Cross commented: "I'm absolutely delighted that Accies have appointed me as Head Coach and given me the opportunity to go straight from playing to coaching. It's a privilege to be appointed to such a famous old club, steeped in great rugby traditions."

Cross has already talked with many of the key figures involved at Accies and is looking ahead to next season. As he explained: "Right now I'm planning the training programme with the rest of the coaching team and can announce that pre-season training will start on 1<sup>st</sup> June. The focus for the coaches will be on performance, not only on match days, but also at training. My philosophy is always to run the ball first and we will be implementing that at Raeburn Place next season. Accies will be playing an expansive game, based around a core set of principles, which will be attractive to both players and spectators alike."

Born in a military hospital in Mauritius, and educated at Sedbergh School in Cumbria, Cross was captain of Wasps U19 team for 3 years. He moved to Scotland 8 years ago, having been recruited for the Scotland U19 team by Frank Hadden.

His rugby playing career saw him playing for Edinburgh over 90 times, and he has represented Scotland at 7s, U19 and U21 levels. He was unlucky not to gain a Scottish cap, having been on the bench for the Wales vs. Scotland match in Cardiff in 2004. During his professional career, he has also been part of the SRU high performance coach development programme, coaching the Scotland U18 Squad, and already has eight years' experience of coaching at both Penicuik and Murrayfield Wanderers.

Edinburgh Accies had a mixed season with all teams below the 1<sup>st</sup> XV performing very well. The 1<sup>st</sup> XV struggled with injuries and losing age grade players at critical times, resulting in them being relegated to Scottish Hydro Premier Division 2. This means they may lose their SRU Academy players, but the rest of the squad remains intact. Simon Cross is realistic about the challenges ahead and said: "Whilst promotion is on everyone's minds, it's important to understand that there are some very difficult teams in Premier Division 2 and the fact that we have just been relegated needs to be at the forefront of everyone's minds."

Rob Moffat, Edinburgh Rugby's Head Coach commented: "I'm sure Simon will do well at Raeburn Place. He's a young man who's passionate about the game. And considering his age, he's got considerable coaching experience already. He'll give it everything he's got and I'm sure the players will enjoy working with him. He's got a good mix; having just come out of the professional game, he's got experience as both a player and a coach. It's a good appointment for him and it's also good for Edinburgh Accies."

Frank Spratt, the Club's Executive Chairman, noted: "Ian Barnes has put in an immense amount of time and effort into the Club over the last eight years and he will be greatly missed. He will be a hard act to follow. However, Simon has been involved at the highest level of professional rugby for the last ten years and will bring this knowledge along with his evident energy and enthusiasm to the Club which will let us focus on returning to Premier 1."

Cross takes over from Ian Barnes, who has spent the last 8 seasons as Head Coach at Raeburn Place. Edinburgh Accies were languishing in Premier Division 3 in season 2002-3 when he arrived at the Club. He quickly stopped the 1<sup>st</sup> XV's downward spiral and it is testament to 'Barney's' commitment and hard work at the Club, that the 1<sup>st</sup> XV quickly gained promotion through the leagues back to Premier Division 1 in season 2007-8. He has also been the driving force in the formation and running of Edinburgh BATs Rugby (a Community Amateur Sports Club set up by Broughton, Accies and Trinity rugby clubs), which is doing so much to develop youth rugby throughout North Edinburgh and is providing a flow of young players into senior rugby.

Simon Cross makes no secret of his desire to spend the rest of his career in rugby coaching and is relishing the opportunity that Edinburgh Accies have offered him: "My life has been in rugby and I've loved the time I've spent playing; but now I'm looking forward to putting something back into the game through coaching. Accies is a great club and it's my belief that through performance, we'll ultimately achieve results."

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