

Rugby – Scotland v England, Women's 6-Nations



It was the women's turn to face England on Sunday at Lasswade and, given that England are far and away the best team in the World – until New Zealand scrape a team together for the next World Cup – no great things were expected of the home side.

Scotland's scrum half, Louise Dalgleish (pictured) was welcomed onto the pitch with a warm round of applause from both teams and spectators at Lasswade on the occasion of her 50th cap and once the National anthems were despatched, the game was on. And on it was.

The English girls were 'on it' just a bit quicker, scoring twice in the first six minutes to put the visitors 10 points to the good. Both kicks were missed and the bane of the women's game was to continue with England's kicker, Katy McLean, only succeeding once from nine attempts.

Following a 'quiet' word from the coach, the Scots took the game straight back up the field and kept the bigger English team at bay, until the 28th minute when Michaela Staniford scored her second and England's third try. Two more tries before the half-time whistle left the home side trailing 27-0 going into the break.

The second half started well for the Scottish girls, but the bigger, stronger English team soon re-established the status quo and, in spite of some spirited defence and powerful tackling from the Scots, they were able to run in – or 'fall in', in one instance – another 4 tries before the referee blew up for full time with the final score 47-0 to England.

There were a couple of 'moments' from the referee during the

game which raised the odd eyebrow. At one point in the first half Scotland were pinned into their left corner and from the open play and a couple of scrums, England clearly touched down at least three times, two being called a 'held-up' by the ref.

And, one of the English tries was scored after the Scots appeared to ground the ball over their own line – thus giving away a five-metre scrum – when an English player reached over to put hands on the ball and be awarded the try.

No blame to the ref, however, as the lighting at Lasswade is particularly bad in the goal areas and nor the girls get the benefit of instant video replays, TMO's and all the palaver that accompanies this aspect of the Professional game (Make no mistake, though, it is a 'Very Good Thing' – something which the round-ball game should consider...) so she did the correct thing when she wasn't sure or was unsighted.

Was this a disaster for the Scottish team? No, not really. They were beaten 89-0 in the equivalent fixture last year, with much of the same team as played on Sunday and were probably saved from a three-figure score by England taking their foot off the gas a touch.

This year, it was a harder task for the visitors. The fairly young Scots team are fitter, faster and a bit more wise this time around. They took the game to the English enough times to worry them a little, a scything run from Sarah Dixon being of particular concern, but it was always going to be a nigh on impossible task to get particularly close. And they were still smiling post-match. What more could you ask for?

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