

Rugby – Scotland v France, Women's 6 Nations, 25 February 2012



Scotland's women came away from last weekend's game pointless for the third time in three matches this Championship. To be fair to the team, France didn't look all that great either and although they scored 4 tries and a penalty to take the match 23-0, the Scots defence held out everything the French backs or individual forwards could throw at them and it was really only through kicks up field and penalties that they progressed up the field and into the 'red zone'.

The home side started well and went on the attack from the kick-off, but couldn't penetrate past the French 22 line. Once the ball was turned over the French side took the game to the Scots, but strong defence kept them in check and it wasn't until the 19th minute that the French scored their first try of the game. From set-piece ball near the line, the French forwards clumped together and, massively outweighing the Scottish pack, trundled over for the first score. With a penalty and another forwards' rumble, the visitors lead 13-0 at the break.

Scotland started the second half as they had the first, but the French soon got back into character and scored their third, forward driven, try. With the conversion hitting the bar, it was 18-0 to France. After a yellow card was 'awarded' to Scots' front-row, Tracy Balmer, the French went on the attack again only to be held out by a tremendous display of tackling from the Scots. Well, for nine-and-a-half minutes of the sin-binning they were held out, only to go under to yet another forwards' try.

For the final 20 minutes the Scottish girls looked to get a score on the board and some fine passing and running play saw them progress up the field on a few occasions, only to be stopped by errors or good defensive play from the visitors. So 23-0 to France at the end, another 'duck' for the Scots girls, but progress is being made. 53-3 was the score in the 2011 game, so, like the England and Wales games, the Scots have halved the points deficit to these teams inside 12 months. Glass half full? Probably, but when it's considered that the Scottish side are all strict amateurs, have only, in effect, three strong teams North of the Border and have to train and play in their own time – and some take unpaid leave to do so – to get twice as close to teams of the caliber of England and France can surely only be viewed as progress.

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