

Women's Hockey – Scotland v South Africa



Scotland v South Africa – Women's Hockey, 28th May 2012

Scotland's Women are playing a series of International Tests against South Africa in preparation for the latter's Olympic campaign. With four of the top players in the GB squad for the Olympic games in London, Scotland were a little weak, but still fielded a strong squad against the team six places ahead in the World rankings (SA are 12th). Before the start of this, the second match – the first being a 2-2 draw – Catriona Ralph was presented with a silver quaich and large bouquet of flowers on the occasion of her 100th cap.

To say that South Africa dominated the first half would be to do them an injustice. The Scots barely managed to get out of their own half and it was only a combination of poor finishing and miracle saves from Scotland's Amy Gibson that kept the score 0-0. The inevitable goal from the visitors came from the sixth in a series of penalty corners, scored from a rebound by Sulette Damons.

With the half-time score at 1-0 to South Africa, it didn't look good for the home side, but whatever the coach said at the break it was a different Scotland team that took the field for the second period of play. Three minutes in, Sam Judge sneaked a reverse stick shot past the South African goalie to draw the sides level. Less than a minute later the Scots had another chance to score but the visitors defence easily cleared the ball. The rest of the half was very much an end-to-end affair with neither team really getting on top or creating clear-cut chances. At least until 15 minutes from time, that is, as the Scottish keeper was beaten for the

second time. Left for pace, the defence could do nothing to prevent Jennifer Wilson firing a powerful shot into the goal to put the visitors ahead again.

In spite of a couple of penalty corners from Scotland in the last few minutes, South Africa led on to record the win.

With three more matches in the series, Scotland don't look as if they are going to be disgraced against a superior, on paper, South African side – just as long as they play both halves of the games, anyway.

Photo and Report – John Preece

Web – <http://www.photoboxgallery.com/jlp-photography>