

# Rugby – Scotland v England Under 20s

*Young Scots outpaced by vastly more experienced England*



Gala's ground at Netherdale was the venue for the second round match of the U20 Six Nations between Scotland and England and it was England who went on to win by a very comfortable margin.

Scotland were first on the board with points from a penalty in the first minute which Ben Chalmers knocked over to take a 3-0 lead, A lead that was to be very short lived as England hit back and, before eight minutes were on the clock, had scored two tries, with one converted, to go into a lead they wouldn't relinquish. The first from wing, Henry Purdy, who sliced through a gap in the Scots' defence to go over near the posts – this conversion was missed by Billy Burns – and the second a few minutes later by the other wing, Zack Kibirige, who just outpaced the defence down the line to score his first try of the night, Burns kicked this one and England were suddenly 12-3 ahead.

The next ten or so minutes of the match were dominated by Scotland, who pushed their opponents deep into their own half, and only a bit of desperate defence, helped by the odd, mistake kept the score as was. Until the 22nd minute, at least. Enjoying a bit of possession, the English backs got their hands on the ball and a couple of quick passes, a step past the missed tackle and centre Nick Tomkins was away for the third English try. Burns knocked the kick over and the score went out to 19-3.

But, then it was back to the grind for the Scots. A charged down kick by Tommy Spinks was followed up by the Scottish Captain, but his kick through was just a bit too solid and the dead ball line beat him to it. The drop out gave possession back to Scotland and off they went again. An attack up the right was stopped a few metres out, but quickly recycled ball from the pack and front row, Sam James, was 'assisted' over the line for a try. Chalmers missed the kick so the score was now 19-8 to England with less than 15 minutes of the half left.

And it was 15 minutes that England used well to score their fourth try of the first half. Just before they did so, though, Scotland blew a chance of their own. Escaping a bit of sustained pressure and gathering a dropped ball, the Scots broke away. However, when only metres short, the final pass to Buchan Richardson, was a touch on the low side and the big flanker just failed to hold on to the ball for, what would have been, an easy gallop in. But, as it turned out, it was England who scored next with two minutes to go. Again, their backs tied the Scots' defence in knots and they forced a

penalty out in front of the posts, which Burns kicked through to leave the half time score at 22-8 to England.



Right from the whistle, England were on the attack and, less than four minutes in, had scored their fifth try. Once again, when the backs had the ball, there was pressure on the Scottish defence. A couple of missed tackles left the way in for Tom Stephenson to score. Burns scored the conversion and England were now in an almost unassailable lead, 29-8. But, Scotland weren't prepared to roll over just yet and, securing ball from their scrum, the ball was moved swiftly through the hands until, less than five metres out, 'all' sub, Chris Dean had to do was slip a tackle and slide over near the left corner. Another sub, Ben Cooper, scored the conversion and the score was now 29-15 and looking a bit brighter.

However, the shine was soon wiped off as England went on to dominate the rest of the half and score a further three tries to emphasise the difference in skill, experience and ultimate fitness between the sides. The first try followed on from a penalty award to Scotland and a shirt discussion on the rules between the referee and England's no. 6. Although Scotland had a few moments of possession, the young Englishmen soon got back with the programme and ran in their sixth, and Kibirige's second, try. Sam Olver converted and the lead had stretched to 36-15. Buy this time the Scots were really up against it and only some last ditch tackling stopped the flow – for 10 minutes or so, as the visiting forwards got in on the act and No. 4 Maro Itoje battered his way over. The kick was good and 43-15 was the score.

Scotland then rallied for a period and a series of penalties gave them possession and territory well inside the English 22, but not even a yellow for Kibirige, could give them the advantage and the drive to the line was eventually stopped by an accidental off-side, giving the ball back to England.



Man-of-the-Match award went to Melrose's Damien Hoyland

But, it wasn't quite all over and the rest of the half culminated in a final minutes' try for James Chisholm which left the final score at 48-15 to England

Outclassed? For the second half – certainly. There were moments of brightness for Scotland, but the ultimate killer punch was missing and the vastly more experienced visitors – players from Northampton, Bath, Saracens... you get the picture – were far too good for players from Edinburgh Accies, Boroughmuir, Melrose, etc.

A full set of images from the match will appear [here](#) in the next few days