

Rugby – Scotland v England

Poor Scotland lose in a miserable encounter at Murrayfield



Man-of-the-Match, Mike Brown takes the ball away from Scotland

Fans will feel cheated out of their ticket costs as Scotland and England played out a miserable match at Murrayfield. Scotland had no chance – and didn't look like they'd create one – of scoring a try and England could only hammer themselves to death against an, admittedly stoic, Scots' defence. Arguably, the 48-15 defeat in the U20 match the previous night was a closer game possession, territory and, crucially, skill wise. Pity about the scoreline....

England had the first chance to get points on the board when the first of many penalties is awarded for off-side. The normally reliable, Owen Farrell, stepped up but stuck his attempt wide, so a bit of a let off for the home side. However, following on from England winning another line out in the Scottish 22, finding his way blocked, Danny Care slotted home a neat drop kick from in front of the posts to put England ahead 3-0. Scotland then had, what was to be, a brief foray into England's half and won their own penalty out wide. Unfortunately, Greg Laidlaw didn't have enough in his boot to see the ball over and, what was to be, normal service was resumed.

Another couple of penalties were then given away by Scottish indiscipline, the second giving Farrell a chance to find touch deep inside the Scottish 22. England's Captain, Chris Robshaw,

fed Care off the top of the line out and the scrum half then found Luther Burrell. With an almost clear run into the line, he swept past one flailing tackle, only to be grabbed round the ankles by Laidlaw. It all looked good, but his momentum, plus a bit of reach, meant that the centre just had to stretch a bit and the first try was on the board after 13 minutes of play (top). Farrell scored the conversion and it was 10-0 to England. Then straight from the kick off, Laidlaw was handed another penalty chance, but it, unfortunately, went the same way as the first.

The next 15 minutes of the match were brightened up for the home spectators by another Farrell penalty miss, but the home side were doing nothing to lift the crowd. Lack of ability to break through the defence gave little option but to kick the ball away and allow England to set up more attacks. They had to be content with yet another penalty, however, and this one Farrell scored to make it 13-0 to the visitors. The half ended with Burrell, again fighting through the defence only to be, this time, pulled up short by Sean Lamont. The ref then blew up for time when the ball became trapped in the ensuing pile up with the score standing at 13-0 to England.

The second half was more of the same. Scotland appeared to be getting worse on the attacking front as the game progressed, with England just failing to deal the final blow on several occasions. Less than two minutes in to the half, however, after his umpteenth failed line-out throw, Ross Ford was cheered from the pitch – only exceeded in volume when Farrell missed yet another kick at goal – as the crowd seemed glad to get him off and replaced by Scott Lawson.

And so it continued. Penalty after penalty, missed pass after

missed pass, etc until the ref had seen enough and carded Alex Dunbar for a breakdown infringement. This gave England the chance they needed and Mike Brown took full advantage of the missing man and went round the outside of the defence to score England's second try. With Farrell getting this kick, the score was 20-0 with just over 20 minutes of the match left. And it was a 20 minute period largely spent in the Scottish half, with just the occasional break to get the crowd going. England, for their part, did 'the decent thing' and failed on numerous occasions to break down the Scots' defence. The game, thankfully, ended soon after to put everyone in the stadium out of their misery and just in time for the promised rain to fall and make a miserable afternoon even more so.

What can one say? It was a poor, poor match for an International fixture, with neither side doing themselves any justice whatsoever. Scotland appeared to have forgotten how to play, and England failed to find the killer touch to stick 50+ points on the scoreboard, which given the paucity of opposition, should have been well within their grasp. Summed up by one English supporter to his mates in the car park "I can't believe you guys made me pay to sit and watch that s***!" Succinctly put young man, succinctly put.....

A gallery of images from the match will appear [here](#) within the next few days. Whether anyone wishes to relive the agony is another question.