

Rugby – Scotland U20 v France U20

French U20s overcome battling Scots at Netherdale



In the second of the RBS U20 matches Scotland played in Galashiels, they went down fighting to a strong French side that dominated large parts of the match but were never quite able to run away with it.

That dominance started from the off with the French forwards penetrating deep into the Scottish 22, but they had to be content with a penalty award which No 10, Brandon Fuardo (top photo) sent wide. The Scots then came back and 15 minutes into the match were awarded their own penalty up around the 22, which No 10, Ben Chalmers scored to give the Scots a 3-0 lead. Less than 10 minutes later it was France's turn to add points to the scoreboard. Their No 8, Francois Cros, left Scotland's Malcolm clutching at thin air as the lock sprinted off upfield. His pass to scrum half, Anthony Meric had the ball close to the Scot's line and his final pass to Fuardo saw the stand-off crashing over for the try. Fuardo then converted to give France a 7-3 lead.

Although Scotland had a period of possession – and a missed penalty – following the score, France gradually began to push them back and a series of kicks and mistakes lead to another French penalty from Fuardo in the 33rd minute to extend their lead to 10-3. The last few minutes of the half were played out in the middle of the pitch, and, although Scotland did penetrate the French defence up to their 22, there was no

further scoring and the sides went in at 10-3 to France.

The second half carried on where the first had left off with the French side in the ascendancy. Although they were forced into a couple of errors, they didn't look under too much pressure and an early penalty saw Meric extend the lead by three to 13-3. It then took the French side just over six minutes to score their second try of the match. Driving the ball deep into the Scots' 22, they probed and poked at the defence before pressure told and a pick-and-go from a ruck had No 3, Tommy Raynaud over near the corner. Meric missed the kick, but the score was now out to 18-3 with still over 25 minutes to play.



And it was 25 minutes where the Scots came to the fore. Good passing and running, coupled with penalties against the French, left the Scots within a few metres of the 22. Choosing to go for the corner, the home side won the line out and drove up to the French line. Stopped short, the ball was quickly recycled and a couple of drives later, No 4, Andrew Cramond (eventual Man-of-the-Match) was driven over for the try. However, the conversion attempt hit the post so the score was 18-8 to France with 21 minutes of the second half played. With their tails up, Scotland now took the game to the French. Another 10 minutes in and they had set up another series of rucks near the French line, but getting nowhere, the ball was passed out to centre Blair Hutchison. He then lofted a neat kick into the opposition goal area where it looked like an easy catch for the defender, but under pressure Damien Hoyland, he lost the ball and Hoyland then pounced on the loose ball to touch down for Scotland's second try. This kick was missed as well so the score now stood at 18-13 to France.

The remainder of the match was played mostly in the French half, with the Scots pressing, but with no further scoring the match ended with victory to the visitors, 18-13.

This was a better display from the young Scots side than that against England, but they are still missing the last, wee bit to become regular winners, but, under the tutelage of Sean Lineen, things have moved on and he now has a 'two year' squad he can work with into the future.

Images from the match will be uploaded [here](#) within the next few days.