


Men's Hockey – FIH 4-Nations Tournament

Belgium beats Argentina while England take the expected win over Scotland



Another two matches were played today (Saturday) under blue skies and warm sunshine. It was another fine display of hockey from all four Nations with England and Belgium coming out on top.

The first match-up was the Scotland v England game in which England were very much the favourites to win, being, as they were, 20 World ranking places above Scotland, in fourth. And right from the start they controlled the play very well, keeping the Scots mostly pinned back  in their own half – although Scotland did put a shot past the English post from a diving Gareth Hall – and not looking as if they were trying too hard. A couple of shots on target were dealt with by the defence, one being deflected over the bar by Kenny Bain. But in the 22nd minute, the pressure told as across into the area was collected by captain, Barry Middleton, and slammed past Jamie Cachia in the Scottish goal. England missed another chance a few minutes later before being awarded a penalty stroke just after the half hour mark. Normally a certain goal, Ashley Jackson stepped up and struck the ball off the crossbar to the relief of the Scottish camp. Two minutes before the break, Scotland went on a rare attack and a ball struck into the 'D' was collected by Chris Neilson and guided past the English 'keeper. England stepped up the game play in the second half and found the net, after a bit of confusion, with three minutes played when Tom Carson scored from a close in melee. Scotland fought hard, and just missed with another penalty corner, but England sealed the victory with a 65th minute goal from Simon Mantell to take the win 3-1.

Although not expected to win the match, too many basic mistakes from the Scotland players gave England even more of the ball than they already

had, making life even more difficult for the home side.



The second match of the day was a far closer affair between Belgium and Argentina. As in Argentina's previous match, the men from South America were slow to get going and Belgium dominated the early play, forcing a couple of fine saves from Juan Vivaldi in the Argentine goal, and generally spending too much time than was comfortable in the opposition 'D'. The pressure eventually told with Belgium opening the scoring through Tanguy Cosyns with nine minutes on the clock as the No 32 fired a powerful drag-flick into the goal from a penalty corner. Indeed most of the half consisted of Belgium driving deep into Argentine territory and being repulsed through some desperate defending. At least, until an unscheduled break in proceedings for a fire alarm halted the match and gave the South Americans time to draw breath. And with 33 minutes on the clock, they equalised with a fine goal from Facundo Callioni who followed up an equally fine penetrating run by Matias Peredes.

The second half was more to the liking of anyone supporting Argentina as they were much more on the offensive, getting up the field and into the opposition goal area on several occasions. Unfortunately they conceded a second goal, scored by Cosyns in the 56th minute with a close in shot which he lifted over Vivaldi. Keeping the pressure up, however, Argentina were awarded a penalty stroke seven minutes from time, but the keeper saved the shot with his face mask to keep the Belgians ahead. The match finished with the score at 2-1 and the Argentineans still hammering away at the opposition goal.

Images from the matches will appear [here](#) over the next week or so.