

# Rugby – Scotland v Argentina, viagogo Autumn Test Series

*Five-try Scotland beat Australia-conquering Argentina at BT Murrayfield*



Vern Cotter's first home match as Scotland coach gave the supporters a great deal to feel good about as Scotland played one of their better matches in recent times in their opening viagogo Autumn Test series. Starting with 10 Glasgow Warriors players – all the backs apart from Greg Laidlaw – the team promised to have the bit of cohesion lacking in the last few pre-Cotter matches.

✘ Unfortunately, that 'bit of cohesion' lasted about 90 seconds as a loose pass from Laidlaw went behind the intended target and Argentina's No 7, Javier Deso, collected the ball and galloped in from half way for the opening score. Nicolas Sanchez then put the kick over and it was 7-0. And then it was the home side's turn. Working the ball upfield after the restart, the team moved the ball across the face of the Argentine try line, ending with a ruck a couple of metres out. Richie Gray picked the ball up and dummied the pass out, dived through the gap to score. This left Laidlaw with a difficult kick from the tramlines, but eh ball went over to make it a 7-7 scoreline with seven minutes on the clock.

Argentina then spent the next period of play, pinning the Scotland side back in their own half, but a ruck infringement gave them a chance to go ahead again. This Sanchez duly did and it was 10-7 to the visitors.

The next 10 minutes-or-so of the match were mostly played in the Argentine half of the field with Scotland probing for the breakthrough, but a couple of turnovers from them kept the home side out. Until the 21<sup>st</sup> minute. Centre Mark Bennett put Tommy Seymour in space but his pursuit of his kick through from the wing was 'interrupted by a blatant shoulder charge from Juan Imhoff. With him seeing yellow from referee,


Wayne Barnes, Scotland choose to go for the line and, from the ensuing lineout catch-and-drive, Jonny Gray emulated his brother's efforts of a few minutes previous and burrowed over for a try. 12-10 and another difficult kick for Laidlaw, but the captain had brought his kicking boots up from Gloucester and the ball sailed between the posts for a 14-10 lead.

The Argentine side was now looking a wee bit jaded after their hard Rugby Championship campaign and three minutes later another skilful passing move from the backs came up trumps with Sean Maitland going over on the right wing. Laidlaw then saw yet another difficult kick over the bar for the home side to go 21-10 into the lead. Another fine penalty strike from Man-of-the-Match, Laidlaw, then put the Scots further ahead at 24-10 and that's how they went in at half time.



Stuart Hogg missed a long range kick early in the second half, but redeemed himself a couple of minutes later with Scotland's fourth try. A tackle on Rob Harley drew in the visitors' defence and his offload put Laidlaw through a yawning gap which he exploited to run at the Argentine defence. His pass then found Hogg on the wing and the full back, evading a desperate attempted tackle, threw himself over in the corner for the opening score of the second half. This gave Laidlaw his fourth really challenging attempt at goal – he must have been wondering – but, again, he came up with the goods and the score now stood at 31-10 to Scotland after 47 minutes. The game now went into a bit of a midfield arm-wrestle – relieved with a 61<sup>st</sup> minute penalty from Laidlaw (34-10) with neither side dominating and the whole thing getting a bit bogged-down.

Argentina then upped their game and a yellow for Harley gave them the man advantage and they crossed the line, only for Barnes to rule a double movement and award a penalty to Scotland. This only stopped them for a few minutes and pressing the line again caused Scotland to commit an infringement suitable severe enough for the referee to award a penalty try. The easy kick went over and pulled the score up to 34-17 and the visitors' tails went up and they looked decidedly more alert than they had for the previous 20 minutes.

Not alert enough, however, as a simple pass out from Cortez was intercepted by a flying Seymour who flew away to score a spectacular diving try under the posts to put Scotland further ahead with nine minutes of play left. Duncan Weir scored the afters and opened the gap to 41-17. 

Out of sight? Maybe not, as the visitors turned up the heat in the final few minutes to another two tries to make the final score closer than it, perhaps, should have been.

Following Jim Hamilton getting binned just as Harley returned, a ruck on the line saw scrum half, Martin Lanajo diving over the pile of bodies for Argentina's third try. Juan Martine Hernandez scored the conversion to pull the score up to 41-24. The final seconds of the match had Scotland defending gallantly again – with Bennett performing a try-saver a few metres out – but another touch down on the final whistle by Cubelli gave an easy kick for Hernandez to bring the final tally up to an Argentina-flattering 41-31.

However, it was a fine performance from the Scots, who, unusually, managed to attack and defend with equal skill in the same match – something that has lacked a little in the past. The BT Murrayfield faithful now have to look forward to the entirely different prospect of the World and multi-Rugby Championship champions, the New Zealand All Blacks, gracing the hybrid turf. We can but hope.....

Images from the match will appear [here](#) over the next few days.