

Will Scotland qualify for Euro 2016?



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Every member of the Tartan Army has held onto the dream that, one day, they would see their beloved national football team represent the country in a major tournament once again. It has been 14 years since Scotland were eliminated in the group stages of the 1998 World Cup in France, with subsequent attempts to reach the European Championships or World Cup falling short. The Euro 2000 play-off defeat to England, under the guidance of Craig Brown, is the closest Scotland have come to qualifying, but any fears that the national team will always be the 'nearly men' of international football may soon be over. An excellent start to the Euro 2016 qualifying campaign has created renewed hope that Gordon Strachan's side not only has what it takes to compete at the highest level, but also qualify for the upcoming tournament in France. Betway.com will follow Scotland's progress and provide odds for their next qualifying match at home to Gibraltar in March 2015, a game which they would expect to win comfortably.

Group D progress

Being drawn in the same qualifying group as Germany, Poland and Ireland would have left many Scotland fans fearing the worst, particularly as the opening game presented a daunting trip to face the 2014 World Cup winners in their own backyard. Strachan's side more than held their own in Dortmund and arguably deserved a draw for the hard work and number of times they had their illustrious opponents on the back foot, but Germany's quality shone through in the end to take a 2-1 victory. The defeat may have been unsurprising to even the

most ardent of Scotland fans, but the performance provided wonderful encouragement that the Tartan Army could be in for a [successful qualifying campaign under Strachan](#).

A strong 1-0 victory against Georgia in October was almost followed by a wonderful victory in Poland three days later, only for a late equaliser to deny Scotland in a 2-2 draw. It made the game at Hampden Park against Ireland a must-win game in the context of Group D; despite excellent performances, Scotland had to remain within touching distance of the top three and not be cut away from the chasing pack behind surprise leaders Poland. A superb goal from Shaun Maloney [secured an invaluable 1-0 win](#) that put Strachan's team level on points with Ireland and Germany after four games, with the dream of qualifying for Euro 2016 now becoming a realistic possibility.

Upcoming matches

While the Tartan Army will have to wait until the end of March 2015 for Scotland's next qualifying fixture, there is growing optimism that they will amongst the 24 teams who will participate at Euro 2016 in France. UEFA's decision to increase the number of participants in European Championships from 16 to 24 provides a wonderful opportunity for nations such as Scotland to not only qualify, but do so on a regular basis to be part of the euphoria and unrivalled feeling of playing in a major tournament. The upcoming fixture against European newcomers Gibraltar should provide Scotland with the best opportunity to considerably increase their goal difference and put three more points on the board, with the minnows conceding 21 goals in their first four official qualifiers, and are yet to score. Travelling to Ireland in June will undoubtedly be a much more difficult test for Strachan's team, while the trip to Georgia on September 4th offering a potential banana skin that Scotland must overcome if they have real ambitions of qualifying for Euro 2016.