

# Rugby – Scotland v Wales, RBS Six Nations

*Senior win makes it a 2-1 weekend for Wales*



With the U20's winning on Friday and the women losing on Saturday, it was up to the big boys on Sunday to make it a winning weekend for the Scots. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be and, in spite of a last gasp try, Wales ran out worthy winners at BT Murrayfield 26-23.

It was a good start for Scotland as they held the early Welsh attack, but it was still mostly Wales' game in the first 10 minutes going 3-0 up from a Lee Halfpenny penalty on the six minute mark. Then Alex Cuthbert was floored by Alex Dunbar inside the Scots' 22 and was then pounced on by Finn Russell who shifted the ball on to Stuart Hogg and the full back was off. Taking a wide curving run down the left, he evaded the diving Richard Hibbard and, with Tim Visser in support sprinted clear to dive over behind the posts for the opening try. Greg Laidlaw converted and Scotland was ahead 7-3.

From the restart, Scotland used the morale booster to push Wales back into their own territory and set up camp in the 22. The reward came with a penalty for a breakdown infringement and Laidlaw knocked the ball over for a 10-3 lead. But there was still a long way to go and as the match approached the second quarter, Wales were now in the ascendancy, and penetrating runs from Rhys Webb and Liam Williams almost broke through, but some desperate Scottish tackling prevented a score. Or, at least, prevented a try as the pack were caught offside at a min pitch breakdown giving Halfpenny an easy kick to bring the score to 10-6 with 20 minutes of the half left.



The match then spent a couple of minutes in the Welsh half once again, before 'normality' was restored and Wales were setting up 10 metres out from the Scot's line. Scotland gained possession however and Laidlaw box-kicked clear, but this only gave a few seconds respite before they were back again. Then came the first of two yellow cards in quick succession, both for the same foul play. Dan Biggar and Finn Russell both went for the same high ball, but, while Biggar took flight, Russell decided he wasn't going to make it and stayed on the ground. Sadly for him, he didn't then deviate from his path and collected Biggar at the top of his trajectory, taking the Welshman's knees out with his shoulder. For some reason, the referee chose to play on until his assistant called for a check to be made. On the big screen, the stadium saw it all in glorious, slow-motion, Technicolor and Russell saw, a deserved, yellow. The resultant penalty gave Halfpenny another kick which he scored to bring the visitors up to within a point at 10-9.

Now with a man advantage, it didn't take too long – just over a minute, in fact – for the Webb-Williams combo to work a bit of magic. Winger Williams took the ball down the left touchline, into the 22, and drew Hogg across to cover, but the gap he left was filled by Webb and an inside ball from the wing left him with a clear run in to dive over for the try. With his kicking working a treat, Halfpenny scored once again to put Wales into a 16-10 lead.

With less than five minutes left, it was Wales' turn to fall foul of the referee's cards as Jonathan Davies was deemed to have taken Johnnie Beattie out in the air near the touchline. This was a much less clear cut decision, but ref Jackson reached for his pocket and Davies was off.

With the sides now even, Scotland took the opportunity to catch Wales napping and set up on the offensive. But, despite probing along the try line, the half ended with Laidlaw just failing to score, so the players went into the changing rooms

at 16-10 to Wales.

✘ Scotland only managed to have a scoring chance with one of the three first-five-minute penalties awarded and Laidlaw duly saw the score up to 16-13, but a swift riposte from Halfpenny saw the score stretch out to six points again at 19-13. The hosts now took charge of the game, for a few minutes at least, and were rewarded with a 54<sup>th</sup> minute penalty from Laidlaw to come up to within three points again at 19-16.

For the next ten minutes of the match Wales were very much in the driving seat and Williams crossed the line in the corner for, what looked like, a second try for the visitors. However, the score was chalked off as one of the pack had given Williams dash for the line a little help by obstructing a potential tackler.

Scotland were only off the hook for a few minutes, though as another Welsh drive came up trumps with an undisputable try. Back on the pitch, Davies received the ball in the middle and sold Hogg an outrageous dummy, before swerving round Matt Scott and dotting down under the posts Halfpenny score the conversion and Wales had a two score lead at 26-16 with 15 minutes left to play.

Scotland now decided to get their act together and put in some fine attacking play with, firstly, Mark Bennett putting in a fine 30 metre solo effort to just outside the 22 and then Alistair Dickenson and Tim Visser combing to get the Dutchman up to within five metres of the line. Scotland's case wasn't helped by Russell missing a penalty kick to touch and then following this up with a mis-kick which barely travelled 10 metres.

But home crowd had to wait until the final couple of minutes of play before Scotland crossed the whitewash again. Setting up in the right corner the pack rucked time after time up to within centimetres of the line before Jon Welsh forced himself

through the pile of bodies to touch down. Russell then converted just in time for the final whistle to end the match.



On the balance of things, it was probably the right result at the end of the day. Wales showed a lot more promise at times and Scotland were on the receiving end of the referee's penalty give-away bonanza – one of which prevented a Scottish try being awarded – mostly, of their own making. Next up, Italy in a fortnight – surely a home win... Maybe...

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