

# England claim Calcutta Cup

England put themselves right back in the mix for claiming the Six Nations championship yesterday, with a somewhat unconvincing 25-13 win over Scotland at Twickenham.

With Scotland miraculously in front by 13 points to 10 at the interval, England came out in the second half desperate to prove themselves. Tries from George Ford and Jack Nowell secured the victory, which means it will be a three-way fight for the title next weekend.

Following defeat against Ireland in Dublin, in the last round of fixtures, the home side were desperate to claim a win against the Scots and showed their intent right from kick-off.

Within the first minute, a strong drive from the hosts gained a good fifteen metres, before Ford sent Luther Burrell storming through the Scottish defence. A two on one with Anthony Watson was not capitalised on, as Scottish full-back, Stuart Hogg made a brilliant last-ditch tackle to bring a halt to the move.

It did not take long though, for England to get on the scoreboard. After pounding the Scottish defence and enjoying the lion's share of early possession and territory, centre, Jonathon Joseph was able to exploit the gap made by Matt Scott's interception attempt and dart through for the opening try.

Joseph, who is enjoying his first Six Nations campaign, now has four tries to his name and tops the try-scoring leaderboard. Ford converted with aid from the post and England were 7-0 up after four minutes.

Within the opening twenty minutes, Scotland were being ruthlessly exploited in defence. A break from Ben Youngs, released Mike Brown, who looked clean through for a try.

However, once again, it was Stuart Hogg to the rescue. A wonderful chase and tackle, brought Brown down just 3 metres from the try-line.

Once possession was turned over, Laidlaw's slow pass put Finn Russell under pressure within the in-goal area, and indecision allowed England's Courtney Lawes to tackle him out of play. The resulting scrum was turned and Scotland are able to clear their lines with a penalty.

With twenty minutes on the clock, and the stats piled against them, Scotland could count themselves lucky to still be in the game. Their opponents had made over 7 times as many metres (259-35) and were looking dangerous every time they got their hands on the ball.

But on 22 minutes, Scotland were right back in the match, out of nothing. A long throw-in, gave flanker, Blair Cowan, the chance to make inroads into English territory. After going through the phases, skipper, Greig Laidlaw's long pass from the breakdown, found Mark Bennett, who finished well in the corner. Laidlaw's pin-point accuracy from the conversion brought the Scots level.

Ford and Laidlaw exchanged penalties, and the score read 10-10 on the half-hour mark. Almost from the re-start, England were rightly disallowed a try, when Ford's pass to Burrell went forward. The move was finished off by Anthony Watson, who was jubilant as he believed he'd put his side back in front, but referee, Romain Poite, cut his celebrations short.

As the first half neared its climax, Scotland were starting to enjoy the majority of possession and were awarded a penalty. Laidlaw slotted the straight forward kick, and Scotland were ahead for the first time in the match.

So astonishingly, despite being overpowered and under the cosh for much of the half, Scotland went into the break with a 13-10 lead. Hogg's attacking prowess was certainly on show

during the first 3 matches of this year's championship, but it was his heroic defensive efforts which were portrayed, during last night's encounter at Twickenham.

The Scots were forced into a half-time substitution, with Greig Tonks coming on for only his third cap, replacing the injured Matt Scott.

England began the first half incredibly well, and the second half began likewise. George Ford found some space in the 22, a skilful dummy fooled the last defender and the stand-off raced under the posts to regain his team the lead. He slotted the simplest of conversions and the English had a four point cushion (17-13).

A penalty from Ford on 50 minutes extended the host's winning margin to seven points.

Mid-way through the second half, England were disallowed try for the second time, when video replays showed that James Haskell's pass to Mike Brown went forward. To his credit, the full-back did brilliantly to finish the move under the posts, but play was brought back and the score remained at 20-13.

Although England were making numerous handling errors – when the Scots got the ball, they were finding it extremely difficult to break down a stubborn defensive line and were therefore struggling to get a foothold in the match.

Both sides shuffled their packs, in the hope of gaining the ascendancy in the match. However, there were very few scoring opportunities created.

With 4 minutes remaining, the game was finally dead and buried. After Ford's routine penalty hit the post and bounced back into play, England gathered possession and went through the phases. The ball was then shipped out to the left wing, a long pass from Ford was gathered by Jack Nowell, who managed to side-step Dougie Fife and finish in the corner. Ford's

conversion attempt fell wide, but England now had a comfortable 12 point lead and that is how the match would end.

At the beginning of the match, it did look like it could be the forty point margin that many English pundits and fans were predicting. However, a lot of credit must be given to Scotland, who battled their way back into the game. For a while, the two teams were only separated by seven points, and at that time there was still a chance for the visitors to cause an upset, but England managed to cement the win and prevail by 25 points to 13.

England now top the table with six points, and crucially have the best points difference. It must be said Stuart Lancaster's men will certainly have to be more clinical with their finishing, passing and their general handling of the ball when the French come to town next week, aiming to spoil the English party.

As for Scotland, despite being bottom of the table with a clean sweep of defeats, praise must go to Vern Cotter. The coach, who has been in charge for less than a year, has brought a new exciting style of play to the national team. In every game of this year's championship, they have been well in the match. Three of the losses could have easily ended in victories, but bad luck and some questionable refereeing decisions leave the squad without the credit they really deserve.

Scotland end this year's campaign, with a home match against Ireland at Murrayfield. Like France, the Scots will be hoping to defy the odds and have their say in who will win the RBS Six Nations 2015.

Ireland slumped to a 23-16 defeat earlier on yesterday at the Millenium Stadium, in a result which ended their dreams of a Grand Slam and also brought Wales renewed hope of claiming the title. England, Ireland and Wales can all win the championship

next weekend, in what will likely be a thrilling 'Super Saturday'.

Next Saturday's Fixtures:

Italy vs Wales (12.30pm kick-off)

Scotland vs Ireland (2pm kick-off)

England vs France (5pm kick-off)

Submitted by [Andrew Fleming](#)

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