

Rugby – Scotland v Ireland, RBS Six Nations


Ireland beat Scotland and take the 6 Nations Championship.



However, they had to wait until England failed to beat France by, at least, 26 points before they could be awarded the title. And it was close, as England outplayed France to win 55-35 – just six points short.

Still, it was to prove another hard day at the coalface for Vern Cotter's men as Ireland were simply too good for the Scots who played well in parts, but just couldn't get going to any great extent against the team vying for the Championship,

Scotland started well and were up in the Irish 22 early on, but Ireland held out and a quick turnover in the midfield gave them the ball and field position. Winning ball from a scrum near halfway, the ball was whipped across the pitch to the left and it was only a last gasp tackle by Stuart Hogg that prevented the try. But the visitors were now close in and a series of rucks moved the play across the front of the posts to where Paul O'Connell could dig the ball out and dive over for the opening try. A call for a TMO check delayed the confirmation, but all was well and, with Johnny Sexton adding the extras, Ireland were 7-0 ahead after 5 minutes.

The next five minutes were, essentially, a repeat of the first five, but this time Ireland had to settle for a Sexton penalty which moved the score up to 10-0. 

Scotland then seemed to come alive and spent the next seven or eight minutes on the offensive. They won the restart ball and

quickly moved the ball along the line, but Ireland managed to turn them over and clear. However, they had done so illegally and Scotland were awarded a penalty. Proceedings were then delayed for a few minutes as first the referee had to have treatment for a blood injury, then Dougie Fife left the field to get sewn back together, closely followed by Euan Murray – also for a blood injury ‘seeing to’. The ref was quickly cleaned up, Visser came on for Fife and Geoff Cross came on for Murray and play resumed.

Scotland won the lineout and then the next for another penalty, which set them up close to the Irish line. Jonny Gray and David Denton both had a run at the defence, but when the ball was moved out to Visser, he was gang-tackled off the pitch. Ireland won their lineout, but O’Connell knocked on, giving the ball back to Scotland about 10 metres out. Greg Laidlaw’s pass off the back of the scrum found Finn Russell who then put Matt Scott into a gap. But it was a gap that was quickly closed and the ball was eventually won back and cleared by Ireland. Back came the Scots though and this time they were rewarded with a penalty in front of the posts which Laidlaw slotted for a 10-3 score.

The Scots then dominated the next eight or nine minutes, but couldn’t get through and then Ireland had a sniff of the ball and were off. A couple of simple plays later, quick lineout and No 7, Sean O’Brien peeled off the back and fired himself in for the try. Sexton scored the conversion and Ireland were 17-3 up with 26 minutes played.

Then hope for the home side as Jim Hamilton found himself in possession and lumbered off upfield with only Luke Fitzgerald to barge over. However, O’Connell was in an equally lumbering pursuit Usain Bolt has *nothing* to worry about! – and this distracted the Scot and allowed Fitzgerald to line him up.

But Scotland were on the up and they followed up with fair bit of running play, culminating in a kick into space. Rob

Kearney, usually solid under the high ball was forced into an error by Hogg who collected the loose ball, off-loaded to Tommy Seymour who then made ground, but was stopped well short. But, he got the ball away and it ended up with Finn Russell who galloped round the outside of the defence to dot down behind the posts. Adding Laidlaw's conversion took the score up to 17-10 to Ireland with less than 10 minutes to play. ❌

It was starting to look good for Scotland and they crossed the line again with a few minutes left, but Hogg's touchdown was disallowed due to Matt Scott's knock on.

The second half was almost all Ireland. Scotland had a few goes at the line and even managed to get Hogg over again in the 74th minute, but he had dropped the ball as he was hit hard just as he was about to ground the ball, so 'No Try'.

A few minutes in and the visitors added to their score with another Sexton penalty – 20-10 – followed up by another and then their third try and conversion on the 50 minute mark, Jared Payne and Sexton combining to make it a 30-10 score line.

❌ Scotland were now under severe pressure and lost Hamilton and Cross in quick succession and nearly lost another three points to Sexton, but the upright came to Scotland's aid.

A raft of subs then came on to help, but despite a fine period of play, Ireland went a further three points clear, to 33-10, from another Sexton penalty.

With Hidalgo-Clyne – who was to put in a, late on, Hogg-esque try-saver on Tommy Bowe – on for Laidlaw, Scotland's recycle play stepped up a gear and they were quickly up near the Irish line, but once again the ball was lost and cleared well into the hosts 22. And, once again, Ireland were on the attack and this time around, their foray into the Scots' 22 was rewarded

with O'Brien's second try of the match, Sexton's conversion and an Ireland lead of 40-10. Scotland did get Hogg across the line as described above, but it was all over and Ireland had completed their part of the equation and could do nothing more, but wait and see.

The rest, as they say, is now history. Ireland took the title and Scotland took the Wooden Spoon following a whitewash series – their second since 2012 and while they can, and do, play good attractive rugby, they can't seem to play it for long enough. Ireland today, however, were out of sight.

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