

Rugby – Scotland v Ireland, RBS U20 Six Nations

Clean sweep for U20's at home with win over Irish



Scotland's U20's won in Galashiels on Friday night to secure third place in the BBS U20 Six Nations Championship – their highest ever.

An early scrum won the Scots territory which they followed up with a lineout win and subsequent penalty. George Horne missed the kick, but from the restart, Scotland were straight back, knocking on the door of Ireland's defence. Another lineout and rolling maul saw the pack over the line and Neil Irvine-Hess touched down at the back for the opening score with less than two minutes on the clock. Horne then scored with the kick to put the home side 7-0 ahead.

Scotland then weathered a period of Irish pressure with attempts down either wing, Stephen Fitzgerald nearly getting through, but No 10, Rory Hutchinson stopped the Irishman before any real damage could be done.

Then Scotland scored their second try of the night. Another man to watch, Alec Coombes, broke around the outside of the Irish defence and made it up to the 22, only being finally stopped by Ireland's No 10, Ross Byrne. Ally Miller followed up and collected the ball for Scotland, but he was heaved into touch before he could get going. Winning the lineout, Scotland's pack resorted to their powerful maul set up and marched Ireland back. They were stopped short, but a couple of recycles saw, eventual Man-of-the-Match, Lewis Carmichael touching down for the second try. This time Horne missed the kick – it wasn't to be his night – but 18 minutes in Scotland were 12-0 ahead and were probably the better side of the two.

Ireland then seemed to pull themselves together and put in a period of fine play, culminating with a 25th minute try to put them on the scoreboard with a successful penalty from Byrne.


With the score at 10-3, it was still looking good for Scotland and a couple of line breaks had the defence scrambling, but it was the visitors who scored next. With their backs starting look dangerous a passing move set up near half way by Byrne saw the ball quickly over to the winger, Fitzgerald and he galloped in from a long way out to score under the posts. Byrne knocked the kick over to take Ireland up to within a single score at 12-10.

Once again Scotland returned on the offensive and saw out the half where they had started, deep in the Irish 22.



The second half was an altogether different affair. Whatever it is that some coaches instil in their teams at half time must have been doled out in bucket loads by the Irish coaches as it was a much 'better' side that took to the field in the second half. They spent large periods of the early half less than 10 metres from the Scotland line and it was only a knock on and a fine last minute tackle by Zander Farguson that prevented them adding to their tally. But, as they tired, Scotland gradually came back into the game and, with 10 minutes to go, it looked as if they would indeed hold onto their two-point lead

However, that wasn't to be the case, because inside the final ten, Scotland were up in the Irish 22 and setting up for a lineout. Once again they won the ball and set up their dreaded rolling maul. With Carmichael in charge of the ball, they, once again, steamrollered Ireland back over their line to allow Carmichael to score his second try. Horne missed another kick, but at 17-10 with six minutes left, it was on the cards for another Scottish win.

And that's how it ended. Ireland had a go, but didn't look like scoring so Scotland held onto their lead as the referee blew up for full time, giving them a fine win over a decent  Irish side and securing third – on points scored difference – in the table between France and Wales.

With the Junior World Cup on the horizon in June, Scotland are looking in a fine position to do well. Their scrum is particularly strong – they pushed Ireland all over the park – and things are looking up in the back division as well. Half the squad are also young enough to carry on next season so it could be a couple of good years for the young Scots, something that's not been on the cards for a long time.

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