

Rugby – Scotland v Ireland, RBS Women's Six Nations

Irish score record points tally to secure Championship.



Ireland's women duplicated their male counterparts with a record win over Scotland at Broadwood on Sunday to win the RBS Women's six Nations title. As with the men it was a clinical demolition of the opposition and, while Scotland had a couple of decent periods of play, they couldn't begin to match the Irish, nor, indeed, could they match the performance they put in against England in the previous round.

The match started badly as Lisa Martin failed to get the ball 10 metres and so gave Ireland an early scrum on halfway. Unfortunately, the usually reliable, Martin was to repeat the error another couple of times during the match. This put the visitors on the front foot from the start and, five minutes in, they scored their first of their 11 (eleven) tries as No. 15, Niamh Briggs galloped in from inside the 22. She missed her kick, but 5-0 after five minutes was a portent of things to come.

She amended her kicking error with a successful penalty a few minutes later for 8-0 and then it was the home side's turn to score. Winning the restart ball, they were quickly up in the Irish 22 and pressing for a score. That score came in the shape of a Nuala Deans penalty around the 15 minute mark. Deans' penalty was to prove the only points for Scotland and, at least, shows that Scotland now have a couple of decent place kickers in place. For this match, however, Deans was selected on the wing, rather than centre, where she was looking after a veritable whippet in the form of Alison Miller, and she looked just a wee bit lost.



20 minutes in Ireland scored their second try from a rolling maul, Claire Molloy, touching down to go 13-3 ahead.

Then Scotland had their best period of the match. They pushed Ireland back inside their 22 and first, Jade Konkel and then Lana Skeldon got within 5 metres to put a great deal of pressure on the defence. Sadly for Ireland, the cost of the defence was a dislocated shoulder for winger, Hannah Tyrrell. Once she was helped off, it was Ireland's scrum and they cleared their lines to snuff out the best chance the home side would have of crossing the line.

Although Scotland enjoyed brief periods of possession and showed some good passing and running skills, it wasn't too long before Ireland scored their third try. It was an unfortunate time for the home scrum to get pushed back – and the only time during the match – but pushed back they were, over the try line and all Heather O'Brien had to do was fall on the ball. Briggs then scored the conversion to put Ireland in a 20-3 lead.

Another roll over try by the pack, this time Gillian Bourke doing the necessary and a run try in from halfway scored by the aforementioned whippet, Miller – accompanied by a variety of successful kicks from Briggs – took the match up to the break and a 37-3 scoreline in favour of Ireland.

Shortly after the break, another Miller try from distance and a close in pack try with No 6, Paula Fitzpatrick doing the honours. Briggs missing with one kick meant that Ireland now had a, more than, commanding 49-3 lead five minutes into the second half.




Scotland now enjoyed another short period of running at Ireland, but it was soon back to the script and No 4, Sophie Spence, added the eighth try as she battled over from close

in. Briggs, again, added the extras and we were now looking at a 56-3 score line.

Either side of the ninth try – a run in off a lineout by 21, Tania Rosser, Scotland again saw a fair bit of ball, but Ireland's defence, coupled with errors from the Scots, never allowed much to develop. However, Chloe Rollie provided a bit of spark from full back as she cleanly collected a couple of long kicks from Ireland and made some ground.

With less than 10 minutes left, however, the 'authorities' deemed it appropriate to bring out the 'Six Nations Winners' board and Ireland just piled on the pressure for another two tries, from Miller for her hat-trick and centre Jenny Murphy, to bring up that record breaking score line – 73-3. Much celebrating ensued.....

How did they do? Very well over the piece. Only losing to France, Ireland thoroughly deserved the title, playing good, entertaining and skilful rugby on the way. Should they have 'taken their foot off the gas' and not kept piling on the points? Absolutely not! It was a wholly professional performance and would have done nothing but show disrespect for their opponents had they done so. So well done the Green  Team and congratulations all round.

And how did we do? Not so great as it turned out as the Irish team just didn't allow Scotland much possession and, what possession they did get was quickly snuffed out either from simple errors or Ireland forcing the turn over. There were some good individual efforts – Jade Konkel – Player-of-the-Match again – put in her usual hard-working shift, Chloe Rollie looks good as an attacking full back (shades of Stuart Hogg, perhaps?) and Lana Skeldon is turning into a fine hooker. Overall the scrum played well and, although they had no answer to Ireland's rolling maul – hands up anyone who finds 'Scotland struggle against rolling maul' familiar – but more than held their own at the set piece. Work to do? Oh,

yes. But finding the correct position for players is also important. One only had to look at Nuala Deans on the wing. Miles away from where she could use her size and strength to its best advantage in the centre and she ended up suffering the 'shepherd's crook' early in the second half in favour of Jenny Maxwell.

Oh, and a bit more investment in the players might help.....

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