

# Rugby – This Weekend's Rugby Round-up

 *Image courtesy of Neil Kennedy ([Hasbeanz](#))*

## **International Rugby**

All three Scotland representative sides were beaten by their English counterparts over the weekend with the U20's playing a traditional 'game of two halves', the women putting up a stiff resistance to England, but simply being overpowered – scored another try, though – and the senior side at times showing a lack of ability to even win the wooden spoon.

## **U20's Match**

England were clearly the better side in the first half, but, 30 minutes in, it was only the kicking skills of Rory Jennings and George Horne that had added any points to the score board, with Jennings keeping English noses in front 9-6.

Then, on the half-hour mark, England scored the first of their three tries, with scrum half, James Mitchell crossing the line and Jennings adding the conversion for a 16-6 lead. The home side then turned on the pressure and another two, unconverted tries, before half time took them out to 26-6 as the ref blew for the break.

The second half was an entirely different affair – at least as far as endeavour went.

Alex Coombes was the first to have ago, but the better chance came from Magnus Bradbury in the 50<sup>th</sup> minute.

Bradbury received the ball out wide and powered through the

defence. But, numbers told and he was heaved over the sideline into touch before he could ground the ball. The ref went up to the TMO, but he confirmed the lineout.

Scotland's assault on the English line did come up trumps eventually. A combination of Ross Graham and Rory Hutchinson made some space and allowed Ben Robbins to end the move with a try out near the right touchline. Horne then missed the kick to leave the score at 26-11.

England came close on a couple of occasions in the half, but a dominant Scotland side kept them out, but, unfortunately, failed to add to their points tally, 26-11 being the final score.

### **Women's match**

Eight tries from England against one for the Scots, at first glance would like another steamrollering for the National side, but Scotland made England play for their win and, at times, looked the better side.

England's Ruth Layborn – playing in her home town – crossed the line with barely a minute on the clock and appeared to herald another absolute tonking from England for the visitors. Katy McLean stepped up for the conversion and, in a match where the English kicking skills went AWOL, missed the conversion. Minutes later, Nuala Deans pulled the Scots back to within a couple with a successful penalty.

Then England crossed the line again for their second try, Tamara Taylor, another local, going over. Once again Scotland picked up their game and, repelling all boarders for a while, they pushed upfield and forced another penalty, scored by Lisa Martin this time, to keep in touch at 10-6 with 20 minutes played.

England, however, were proving too strong most of the time and crossed the line twice more before the break from rolling

mauls – McLean missing both attempts at goal – for a 20-6 half time score.

Once again, England scored just after the start, with their fifth try – and a fifth McLean miss, but the visitors got stuck in with Lisa Robertson and Lana Skeldon consistently making ground.

And then, with England struggling – yes, really! – to get clear of their half, a loose pass was picked up by winger, Eilidh Sinclair, who ran in from 20+ metres to score near the posts. Martin then added the extras for a respectable 25-13 scoreline.

Despite Scotland's efforts, however, England scored another three tries – with one conversion by Amber Reed – to take the match out of sight. McLean was binned with less than 10 minutes to go and this gave Scotland some incentive to pile on the pressure, but the English women held out for, what looked like on paper, to be an easy win.

## **Senior Match**

 *Image – Mark Bennett scoring against Italy (John Preece)*

Less said about the first 20 minutes the better as Scotland played like a poor pub side, with the only highlight being three try-saving tackles from Stuart Hogg. Unfortunately, the fourth one got through as Jonathan Joseph ghosted through the defence to score after five minutes. George Ford scored the kick and the early, 7-0, lead went to the home side.

However, nearing the end of the first quarter – during which the England backs, especially Jack Nowell, were having a field day – someone, somewhere must have flicked a switch as Scotland suddenly came to life. Winning line out ball, they swiftly attacked the English line and a sequence something like – and almost as quick as – pass-pass-recycle-pass-pass-recycle-pass-pass-TRY, saw Mark Bennett over in the corner for

Scotland's try. Greg Laidlaw then nailed the touchline conversion to pull the side level at 7-7, with 22 minutes of the match played.

England crossed the line again, but the pass the Luther Burrell was adjudged to have been forward. Scotland then went on the offensive again and forced a rushed defence from the home side, but it was Ford who was next on the score sheets with a penalty for England. However, before the half ended, Laidlaw had drawn the sides level and then gave Scotland the lead to end the half 13-10 ahead.

Three minutes in and it was 17-10 as Ford scored an early try and conversion, which he followed up a few minutes later with a penalty for a 20-13 lead.

The rest of the half was played out, mostly in the Scotland half, but dogged defence and a few forays upfield held England at bay, at least until the final minute when Nowell, who had been a threat all day, got his just rewards with a fine try. Ford missed the kick, but 26-13 was the final score and Scotland were staring another whitewash in the face, and that could be delivered next week, courtesy of Ireland.

## Club Rugby

### BT Premiership

It was a good weekend for Edinburgh sides with Heriots, Accies and 'Muir all winning at home, with the match at Currie being postponed due to International Player dispensation.

Heriots beat Gala 34-28, Boroughmuir beating Hawick 32-25 and Edinburgh Accies beating Stirling County 15-12.

This leaves the league mostly settled, with Heriots topping the table with 68 points and Currie still in sixth with 42.

Boroughmuir have managed to escape the play-off zone and are up to seventh with 37 points from their 18 games, but Stirling

are only one place behind, with a game in hand, on 34 points and Hawks have two games in hand with 32.

### **BT National League, Div. 1**

Only Stewarts-Melville were playing at the weekend and they beat Biggar, away from home, 19-17.

This leaves them in second with 75 points from 21 matches, but GHA are only two points behind with a match in hand.

Watsonians are, currently in fourth with 62 points but still have three matches to play in the 22 match season.