

Rugby – Scotland v England, RBS 6 Nations – Calcutta Cup

England come out on top at BT Murrayfield



With both teams smarting – for differing reasons – from their respective Rugby World Cup exits, it was going to be a brave soul who predicted the outcome of the 2016 Calcutta Cup at BT Murrayfield. With England on a roll of victories in the encounter they were favoured to win, but could Scotland take heart from the performances of the representative sides the night before?

The first 10 minutes of the match involved a bit of to-ing and fro-ing with neither team especially dominant. A couple of either way penalties allowed the ball to be cleared, but come scrum time, England proved, and continued to prove, a bit of a handful.

And it was a scrum that lead to the first score. Wing, Jack Nowell received the ball wide and blasted off down the tramlines, neatly chipping Finn Russell and following his kick through. Scotland's 15, Stuart Hogg gathered the ball over his own line, but, before he could get his kick away, Nowell and Anthony Watson forced him to ground the ball.

From the resultant five-metre scrum, England's 8, Billy Vunipola got round the side and sent his pass to scrum half, Danny Care. He then dropped the ball off to No. 5, George Kruis who smashed his way over for the try. Centre, Owen Farrell then stepped up to add the extras and, with 12 minutes played it was 7-0 to the visitors.

Following the restart, Hogg collected the return kick from George Ford and sent one of his own boomers back into England's 22. A bit of fumbling ensued allowing the Scots to get up and over the ball, winning a penalty for Greg Laidlaw to have a go at. His kick went over and Scotland were on the scoreboard, but now only four points behind at 7-3.



Three minutes later, we have another. Matt Scott makes a good run up the centre and quick recycling gets the ball back in play and Scotland on the advance, but the referee, George Lacey, is playing an advantage which fails to materialise, so he blows up to bring play back. This time the kick is to touch, putting the lineout a few metres from the English line. With the ball won, flanker, John Hardy sends a missed pass to Laidlaw on the five metre line and he takes the ball wide, then finds wing, Sean Maitland, with an inside ball. Maitland makes a beeline for the try line, but he gets tackled into touch a metre or so out.

The remainder of the half are played out, more or less, between the 22's with the occasional incursion until the 37th minute – having missed one in the 28th minute – Laidlaw gets another shot at goal from in front. Easily stroking the ball over, it is now 7-6 to England as they go into the break.

Scotland start the second half the better of the two sides and keep the game mostly in English territory, rounding out the first five minutes with a penalty lineout in England's 22. However this comes to naught and England clear their lines.

The first serious attempt at points then comes at the other end, eight minutes into the half, but, the usually metronomic Farrell pulls his shot wide and the home side breathe a sigh of relief.

But not for long as the English pack goes on the rampage up the middle. Drawing in the defence, Care shifts the ball out to Nowell on the wing and, with only Hogg to beat, the money's on the winger. Sure enough, although Hogg gets hands on the man, Nowell's momentum is sufficient to see him over the line in the corner for England's second try. With the kick missed, the score advances to 12-6 to the visitors.



Once again the match returns to type, but England are beginning to stretch the Scots and get into the five metre zone more than once.

Scotland, for their part, make a few drives upfield, but give away too many penalties. One bright note happens around the 57 minute mark when a pass from England finds Finn Russell in the way, but his kick skews off his boot into touch.

Then, a bit of controversy. In a Scotland v England match? Oh, yes. Scrumming about 30 metres out from the Scots' line, the home pack destroys the opposition scrum and spreads the pack all over the place. However, Lacey doesn't appear to see what everyone else does and awards a penalty to England for 'not driving' straight. Farrell steps up and, this time, slots the kick home to extend the lead further to 15-6.

The rest of the match is fairly bitty, with only another Laidlaw penalty to get home supporters hopes up and, as the match mostly moves to the Scottish end of the pitch, it draws to the inevitable conclusion and a 15-9 win to England who retain the Calcutta Cup for the ninth year – one drawn match – in succession.

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