

# Rugby – Scotland v England

## U18 pre-Five Nations match

*Young English see off Scots in Stirling*



England v Scotland. Stirling. Wallace Monument. **Bridgehaugh**. This match could have been clichéd to death, but the fact remained that, after the first 20 minutes or so, the young Scots were no match for their English counterparts in Sunday's clash in Stirling in the lead-up to the U18 Five Nations.

Match referee, Adam Jones, almost taking out Scotland's Ben Appleson at the kick-off could have been seen as a bad omen, but the initial exchanges went in the favour of Scotland. However, a couple of penalties shifted the play to the Scots' end and No.10, James Grayson, put the first points on the scoreboard with his successful kick for 3-0 after four minutes.

From the restart, England cleared, but this gave Scotland the chance to run the ball back. And back they came. For almost five minutes they kept possession, but could not get out of the area between the 10 metre lines, despite strong running from a number of players.

The first break came as the ball was shifted across to Appleson on the left wing. He got round the outside of opposing wing, Sam Yawayawa, but couldn't get to the line. Scotland retained possession and, a minute later, Appleson repeated his play, but was tap tackled by Yawayawa and fell a couple of metres short. His attempt to make it too the line was deemed 'crawling' by the referee, so it was a penalty to England.

England made a bit of ground from the lineout, but, in the

first of many turnovers for the home side, the ball came back into Scottish hands. With the first half approaching the mid-point – the U18s play 35 minutes each way – England were again forced to kick clear, but this time there was no mistake. In what seemed to be a signature move, Appleson once again ended up on the left wing with the ball. He skipped past Yawayawa's diving tackle and just evaded full back, Tom Parton, to dive over in the corner for the opening try. However, in what was to be a woeful display of kicking from Scotland, the kick was missed, so the score stayed at 5-3 after 17 minutes.



This seemed to light England's blue touch paper, and the men in white went to work. Keeping Scotland pinned back for the next seven or eight minutes, they won a close in penalty for offside and chose to go for the line. This they won and set up a maul which No. 7, Tom Curry took advantage of the barge over for the try, Grayson then converting for 10-5.

Just over five minutes later, after a fairly evenly matched period, England scored again, this time with a move down the left that put No. 12, Jacob Umaga, over in the corner. Grayson slotted home the kick and it was 17-5, which is how the half ended.

In the reverse of the first half, it was Scotland who were under pressure from the off with England almost scoring in a copy-cat of the move which netted Scotland's try, but the final pass went behind No. 23, Aaron Chapman a couple of metres out.

A period of desperate defending in their own 22 finally got the ball clear, but it came straight back and, as if to atone for his missed tackles in the first half, Yawayawa sides-stepped and hand-offed his way to the line, diving over next to the posts for England's fourth try. Umaga then took over kicking duties from Grayson, but was as successful and, six

minutes into the second half, it was 24-5.

A raft of personnel changes followed as did Scotland's second try. Weathering another pressure moment, Scotland shifted the ball upfield, and went to work. The forwards drew the opposition into a couple of rucks and then the ball went wide via Staffy McDowell to Rory McMichael on the right wing and he squeezed over in the corner for the try. The kick was missed, but the score was now 24-10.

This was, however, just a brief hiatus in England's scoring as, following an Umaga penalty, Chapman sailed through a big gap in the defence for another try. Umaga kicked the extras and it was 34-10.



With five minutes left on the clock, Scotland scored another try after a bit of pack pressure, No. 22 Harry Warr going over in the right corner, but the reply came from Chapman a couple of minutes later with his second and England's fifth try to tie up the match with an impressive 39-15 win.

So..... Despite their early dominance of play and some impressive individual performances -and, it has to be said, probably being the much better side at the breakdown – Scotland were never really in the match once England had found their feet. However, it was the team's first match together and lessons were learned for the upcoming fixture against Wales in the Five Nations tournament.

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