

Rugby – Scotland v Australia

2016 Autumn Test Series

Aussies win another one-pointer at the death



A record crowd of over 65,000 at BT Murrayfield watched once again as Scotland were edged out by Australia with a score in the final few minutes of Saturday's opener of the 2016 Autumn International Series.

Despite having a 10 point lead at the break, several penalties at the breakdown, gave Australia the chance to get back into and, eventually, take the match.

Following a, well observed, minute's silence and the anthems, it had all started well for the home side with an early penalty from scrum half, Greg Laidlaw giving Scotland a 3-0 lead less than three minutes into the match.

But Australia are not one of the best teams in the World for nothing and they came straight back to threaten the Scots' line, only being prevented from crossing by some fierce tackling. The final 'fierce tackle', less than five metres out, saw prop, Sekope Kepu lose the ball in a hit from No. 8, Ryan Wilson. Unfortunately, that passage of play saw two players subbed off with injuries – Wilson limping off for Scotland with a very odd 'blood' injury and lock, Adam Coleman, for Australia.

Scotland's inexperienced front row then came under a great deal for pressure in the ensuing scrum, but the ball came out on the right side and was cleared upfield.

Two minutes later, Scotland scored their first try. Regaining possession from a penalty line out and faced with an advancing


defence, stand off, Finn Russell, spotted a gap at the back and deftly chipped the ball over for debutante centre, Huw Jones to run onto and have a clear line in to score. Laidlaw then kicked the conversion and, with less than 10 minutes played, Scotland were 10-0 ahead.

Ahead for all of around four minutes, as the visitors surged back, with a fine display of attacking play, to score a try of their own.

Regaining their own restart, Australia quickly pushed up into Scotland's 22, winning a lineout deep in the opposition's 22. The ball was then fired across the field and centre, Reece Hodge, crashed through Wilson's replacement, John Hardy to touch down for his side's first points. No. 10, Bernard Foley, was then successful with the conversion to make it a three point game at 10-7.

The match now settled down to a midfield battle with neither side gaining much of an advantage until, with just over 20 minutes played, Australia won a penalty just outside Scotland's 22, which Foley slotted home to even the scores at 10-10.

A missed penalty on 25 minutes from Laidlaw, saw Scotland regain possession from the clearance and get another attack underway. Quick handling moved the ball across the pitch and Russell nearly broke through, but the damage to the line was done and Jones darted through a gap to score his second try of the match. Laidlaw made up for his earlier miss and it was 17-10 to Scotland.

The final 10 minutes of the half were, once again, fairly evenly balanced and the teams went into the break with the hosts 17-10 ahead. 

An early penalty from Foley saw the score closed to 17-13, before, with seven minutes of the half played, the Scottish

pack drove lock, Jonny Gray, over the line for a TMO decision on the possible score.

The lead up to the try had been all about the home side. With accurate passing and quick recycles, play had moved into the Aussie 22. A break down the right from full back, Stuart Hogg, lead to a ruck less than five metres out. Gray picked the ball up and, along with his brother Richie, barged through the opposition to touch down – as was ultimately decided – on the line. Laidlaw lined up for the none-to-difficult kick, but, crucially, hit the post, keeping the score to 22-13.

In the lead up to the next score, Australia took full advantage of Scots' indiscipline to advance and put Foley in a position where, with 55 minutes on the clock, he scored with his third kick of the match for 22-16, or, as it turned out, a converted try behind.

The next 20 minutes were played at a furious rate all over the pitch, with both sides having chances, but not managing to make those chances count. During this time, the visitors lost sub, Will Skelton to yellow for a shoulder charge at a ruck inside the opposition five metre zone, but the loss of a man didn't seem to slow the Aussies down.

Indeed, with less than five minutes left, they were, once again, pressurising the Scots' line. A line out gave them possession and they 'moved' the defence back to the line when giant centre, Tevita Kuridrani received the ball and battered his way through Peter Horne to stretch out and place the ball next to the posts. Job done? Foley could hardly fail to miss the kick and it was, seemingly, all over with two minutes to play, at 23-22, making Laidlaw's miss all the more painful.

However, the next six minutes of play, gave Scotland some hope. With less than 30 seconds left a scrum just short 10 metres out from the Australia try line took an absolute age to set up, but referee, John Lacey, was having none of it. When

it collapsed just over the 80 minutes, he reset but Australia were then pinged for an early push and Scotland set to work.

However, despite their best efforts, the ball was eventually lost forward just shy of the line, bringing the match to a conclusion and the Aussies could breathe a sigh of relief after dodging yet another Scottish bullet.



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