

# Rugby – Scotland v Samoa, 2017 Autumn International Series

## *11 Try Thriller to Open the Autumn Campaign*



Scotland and Samoa delivered up a feast of tries for the sell out crowd on Saturday as they scored 11 tries between them to keep the crowd warm on a chilly November afternoon.

Samoa kicked off to the usual BT Murrayfield roar to start the match and the series, but, within a couple of minutes they found themselves 7-0 down. An early turn over gave Finn Russell the chance to clear with a long kick up-field. There were a couple of defenders in attendance who had nothing better to do than gather the ball and kick to touch. Nothing to do, other than anticipate the bounce of an oval ball, which eluded both players, but not a flying Stuart Hogg. The full back had chased the kick to put pressure on the receivers, but found himself gathering the loose ball and racing in to dive behind the posts for the try. Russell then converted for a 7-0 lead after 3 minutes.

By the fifteen minute mark, the Scots, while resisting the Samoan attack, but conceding three points from a penalty, could have had another two tries on the board. The first 'attempt' was a down-the-line passing move which was foiled by an intercept by the opposing wing.

The second 'attempt', followed a neat grubber kick from Russell which bobbed down the sideline and was booted on by Lee Jones. Once again, Hogg was, literally, on the ball, diving over on the loose ball to 'score'. However, the assistant referee asked the referee to check with the TMO and it was

deemed that the ball had crossed the line so it was 'No try', but Russell had kept the score board alive with a successful penalty for 10-3.

Another penalty followed for 13-3, then Samoa's perseverance paid off.

Having missed a long range attempt, Tim Nanai-Williams went for the line with his next penalty as the clock approached 24 minutes. Three minutes later, following a long series of rucks and mauls across the front of the Scotland line, power told and Josh Tyrel drove over for the try under the posts after another TMO decision. Nanai-Williams then converted for 13-10 with 13 minutes left to play.

Scotland then came to the fore and dominated the rest of the half, scoring two tries in the process.



The first try came from a quick lineout call amongst the backs, with the final pass finding Huw Jones on the five-metre line. He sold a simple dummy and then crashed through the tackle of Reynold Lee-Lo for the try. Russell missed the kick, so it was 18-10 with five minutes to play.

The final try came from more pressure and, taking advantage of a new ruling, went for the line with an over-time penalty to set up the maul that put Stuart McInally over for the first of his two tries, Russell converting for 25-10 in the 42<sup>nd</sup> minute.

McInally's second try book-ended the half time break with a copy cat try in the left corner following a penalty kick to touch, taking to score out to 32-10 with the conversion.

However, the Samoan side were far from ready to call time on the game and, straight from the restart, they pounced on a fumbled ball and series off quick pick-and-goes saw them over the line – and another TMO decision – for a try by Piulla

Fa'aselele. Nani-Williams converted and it was 32-17, with the Scots still looking the likely winners.

✘ The next 15, or so, minutes were a bit bogged down with the match not moving anywhere and the crowd getting so restless they set up their own entertainment with a, well worked, series of Mexican Waves, one with the upper and lower tiers going in opposite directions! Respect..

But, then attention refocussed on the pitch, as Samoa scored again. Going for the line with a penalty, they used their big boys to – it was 'suggested' – to clear the way for Nanai-Williams to find his way to the line to dive over, then convert for 32-24.

It was looking a bit more serious now, so all the 'waving' went back into the box for another time..

With 65 minutes on the clock, Scotland had returned to their game plan – to win – and went for touch on the right with a penalty. With the ball won, they attacked the line, but were repulsed, the ball coming back to, replacement, Peter Horne, who lobbed a deft kick over to the left wing for Lee Jones. The wing gathered, but was tackled short of the line, He still had his arms clear, though and found Alex Dunbar who piled through the defenders for his try for 37-24.

Once again, the Scots made a meal of the restart and Samoa, once again, used their big ball carriers to clear a path to the line, with first, Melani Matavao making the gap for Keiron Fonotia to hammer over. Nanai-Williams again converted to close the gap to 37-32 with just over 10 minutes left.

And it was a final 10 minutes which saw the scoring of another, converted, try apiece.

✘

The first came from Horne, who put in a 30 metre run to the

line for Scotland's try, followed up a few minutes later at the other end by Ofisa Treviranus for the final score of 44-38, ending a roller-coaster of a match which had the crowd – apart from that period of Mexican indulgence – on the edge of their seats for large parts of the 80 minutes.

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