

Hockey – Scotland v Italy – ‘The Italian Series’, Match 1

Scots open ‘The Italian Series’ with a closely contested win



Scotland's women began their second three-match series in Glasgow with a closely fought victory over World Cup-bound Italy. Coming into the first match off the back of a 3-0 whitewash at the hands of Ireland, Scotland were hoping that they could get back on track and tuck, at least, a couple of confidence-inspiring wins under their collective belt.

The first quarter was a fairly even end-to-end affair, with both sides attacking and defending in equal measure. The sides showed a difference in approach with Scotland building towards the attack, and Italy moving the ball around the back, before breaking quickly through the opposition defence.

In the second quarter, Italy looked the more dangerous with breaks down the left piling more pressure on the Scots' defence.

Their breakthrough almost came near the end of the half through a penalty corner. The first strike on goal was well saved by Watsonian's Lucy Camlin in goal, but Italy almost forced the ball home in the ensuing scramble, but the defence held out and the half ended even at 0-0.

Italy started the second half as they had ended the first with pressure on the defence, rewarded with the first goal of the match, which came in the 32nd minute from Giuliana Ruggieri who deflected a drive into the D past the keeper.



The home side almost struck back from the restart. Edinburgh University's, Laura Swanson, stole the ball of one of the Italian defenders and passed to Nicki Alexander-Lloyd. She then took the ball past the first line of defence, before driving into the area – strongly pressed by two defenders before releasing her strike on goal. However, the retreating defenders managed to intercept and clear.

Italy then had two, unconverted, penalty corners in quick succession, but Scotland were beginning to get the upper hand, with Alexander-Lloyd and Hanna McKie being of particular concern to the opposition, McKie getting round the back and creating a scrambled clearance on the near post.

Scotland's equaliser came in the 52nd minute from a penalty corner award, Amy Costello finding the bottom corner with her strike.

The home side then ramped up the pressure in the fourth quarter making life difficult for the Italians down both flanks and making the defence work hard.

The second goal for Scotland came in the 50th minute. Costello, once again, provided the initial strike from the top of the D, but her shot was blocked by the keeper. However, Alexander-Lloyd had stayed wide from the injection and she was on hand to pick up the loose ball and sweep home for the goal and 2-1.

Scotland then pressed home their advantage, pulling out a couple of fine saves from the Italian keeper, Martina Chirico, before it, all so nearly, went wrong. Italy won a penalty corner a few minutes from time and forced the ball home for the 'equaliser', but their celebrations were cut short when their 'goal' was disallowed following an umpires' consultation.

Just under a minute from time, the home side then saw a goal of their own chalked off. Swanson collected a loose ball just to the left of the goal and returned the ball to the centre of the D. Following the ensuing melee, the ball was forced home and the 'goal' duly celebrated. However, the umpires had another wee discussion and the celebrations were curtailed.



But, less than a minute later, they were picked up again as the final hooter went to end the match and Scotland were rewarded with their first-match success in 'The Italian Series'.

The second match in the series is on Thursday at 12:00pm at the National Hockey Centre.

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