

Ground-breaking Women's Rugby deal announced by BBC Alba

An unprecedented number of women's rugby matches will be televised over the next year thanks to Scottish Rugby reaching a ground-breaking deal with BBC ALBA.

The deal includes not only the broadcast of the elite sport with women's Six Nations coverage, but also coverage of the final of Scotland's leading domestic competition, the Sarah Beane Cup – a huge show of support to reflect the growth of the women's game.

The announcement comes just months after a major new deal for Scottish women's football on BBC ALBA was announced, along with the first live broadcast of women's shinty, strengthening the channel's position as the home of Scottish women's sport.

The first Scotland Women's rugby match to be shown under the new deal will be when Scotland host Canada at Scotstoun on Tuesday 27 November. The game will be available live across the UK on the channel and via the BBC iPlayer.

Scottish Rugby is currently promoting women's rugby with the aim to qualify for the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2021, and has recently restructured the playing season to encourage wider participation. Both MG ALBA and Scottish Rugby are committed to increasing the profile of the women's game together in the run up to the Women's Rugby World Cup.



BBC Alba announce a broadcast partnership with Scottish Women's Rugby. © SNS Group/SRU

Dominic McKay, Chief Operating Officer at Scottish Rugby said: "We are working hard to ensure women's rugby has the strongest possible platform to help develop players and broaden the appeal of the game and this partnership with BBC ALBA is an exciting addition to that. We have enjoyed a long-standing relationship with BBC Alba through its coverage of the Premiership and PRO14 and so we are very excited to work with them to broadcast women's rugby in Scotland."

Gemma Fay, Head of Girl's and Women's Rugby at Scottish Rugby said: "I am delighted BBC ALBA have announced they will be covering the Scottish Women's Rugby matches on their channel. The commitment they are showing to Scottish women's sport is really positive and we hope this will in turn help to inspire the next generation of rugby players."

Iseabail Mactaggart, Director of Strategy and Partnership at MG ALBA said: "We are delighted to be able to showcase the growing women's game in Scotland with both Six Nations coverage and the Sarah Beane Cup Final. We've demonstrated with our previous coverage of the PRO14 competition how we can usefully partner to catalyse the growth of a sport, and engage

new audiences – sometimes for the first time – with Gaelic. I am proud that BBC ALBA is able to showcase these sportswomen's efforts both in the national team but also the Sarah Beaney Cup teams. We're excited too to kick off with making the Canada game available there by livestreaming it at the end of the month."

Sport Minister Joe FitzPatrick said: "This partnership is a key step in celebrating and raising awareness of women's rugby in Scotland. Not only will elite female fixtures be broadcast, including the Women's Six Nations, but the grassroots game will gain exposure with people able to view the final of the key domestic competition, the Sarah Beaney Cup.

"Scottish Rugby and their partners have worked hard to increase the number of women and girls participating in rugby, and the commitment of BBC and MG ALBA to showcasing the sport is another step forward."