

# Rugby – Scotland v Italy, U20 Six Nations Championship

The second match – and the headline act – on the cards at Netherdale on Friday was the opening match in the U20 Six Nations Championship with Italy the visitors to, an increasingly cold, Galashiels. With the Club XV going down to Ireland in the afternoon, it was up to their slightly more upmarket colleagues to salvage a bit of Scots pride.

That pride looked decidedly under pressure from early on as Italy threw everything at their opponents and took the game deep into Scotland's half.



Garbisi opens the scoring for Italy  
Just reward came after a couple of minutes when a penalty award gave stand-off, Paolo Garbisi, the chance to open the scoring at 0-3.

Scotland missed their chance to level a few minutes later, but 10, Ross Thompson pushed his kick wide.

The home side set up an attack from the restart, but couldn't find a way through, eventually resorting to a kick and chase that ended with an Italian scrum. This gave the visitors the chance to demonstrate their dominance in this area of play and they were to cause all sorts of issues for the Scots' pack throughout the whole game.



Scotland tried to break clear

As the quarter hour approached, Italy had managed to repulse another probe down the left and had turned the ball over, deep in their 22. It took them a worryingly short time to progress up the pitch to threaten the home line, before a neat pass put front row, Matteo Nocera through for the opening try. The kick was missed, but it was 0-8 after 16 minutes of play.

Scotland had their chance a few minutes later when the opposition scrum was deemed a touch too dominant by the referee, giving the home side territory in the opposition 22. However, despite some fine handling, the visitors eventually

turned the ball over and cleared their lines.



Italy defended well for most of the game  
Another penalty from Garbisis in the 23rd minute opened up the gap to 0-11, before Scotland appeared to find their feet and the remainder of the half was played, largely in the Italian half.

Despite this, the visitors' pack was still holding sway and winning their scrums and the occasional turn over, but Scotland were edging closer to scoring territory, and, as the 30 minute mark ticked over, play was deep inside Italy's 22.

A series of penalties now ensued, with Scotland going for the lineout in preference to kicking for goal and, once possession was secured they looked to drive. However, that strong Italian pack, kept the Scots at arms length and managed to steal the ball a couple of times.



Scotland's Thompson taking his shot at goal  
The final penalty in the 'series' was awarded around 37 minutes and Thompson – or the coaching staff – took the pragmatic route and went for goal. Ball through and it was 3-11, a score which saw the sides into half time.

A handling error from the restart by Italy handed early possession back to the Scots who, thanks to a line break by Sam Grahamslaw, put Connor Boyle into a gap and over the line for a try less than a minute from the start. Thompson slotted home the conversion and Scotland were within a point at 10-11.

Two minutes from the restart, they had their second. With Italy still wondering what went wrong, the Scots blazed a trail to the Italian line and an excellent passing move put Charlie Jupp through and over for the lead at 15-10. Thompson then came up with another fine conversion to stretch the lead to 17-11.



Italy's Michael Mba breaks clear

It was now Italy's turn to re-find their feet and, despite losing a man to yellow, they kept the score sheet as was. They then took this a bit further with their second try of the night, Niccolo Taddia supplying the touch down and Garbisi supplying the conversion for 17-18 after 16 minutes.

The visitors then kept up the pressure, allowing Scotland little time on the ball and easily brushing off the odd incursion. This dominance once again told as, with just under 25 minutes on the clock, they scored their third try, Federico Moroni going over and Garbisi scoring the conversion for 17-25.

A couple of minutes later, the match was stopped as Italy's replacement hooker, Luca Franceschetto is attended to for a serious injury that saw the players removed from the pitch and Scotland's doctor helping to attend to the injured player.



Rufus McLean scoring the third Scots' try

Game on again, Scotland now turned up the wick and spent a fair time on the offensive, running and passing their way deep into the Italian half of the field. Keeping the ball on the move, the final pass from wing, Jack Blain, put sub, Rufus McLean through a gap and over in the corner for Scotland's third try of the match with 10 minutes left to play. Thompson then converted to close the gap to 22-25.

However, this was a gap that was set only to increase as the visitors set about winning the game and their final try came in the dying seconds, with Jacopo Trulla crashing over in the corner and Garbisi converting again for a 22-32 winning margin at the end.

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