

Emotional reaction to last night's historic victory in Belgrade

Scotland manager Steve Clarke has praised his players for keeping their nerve after conceding a late equaliser against Serbia at the Rajko Mitić Stadium in Belgrade last night which led to extra time and ultimately a dramatic penalty shoot-out victory, resulting in qualification for next year's European Championships.

After the final whistle Clarke told Sky Sports: "We were setting up nicely for a typical Scottish scenario – 1-0 up in the last minute and conceding from a set-play.



"It would have been easy to crumble and take the disappointment and not finish the game properly. But they dug in in extra time and kept believing, and they get their rewards. They kept their nerve.

"It's been a very difficult time for the people in Scotland. We spoke before the game about trying to make the nation smile on Friday morning. Hopefully they're going to.

"If we've done our bit to make them feel a little bit better about themselves and about the country, great."

As the players celebrated a tearful goal scorer Ryan Christie said: "It's for the whole nation.

"I hope everyone back home is having a party tonight, because we deserve it. What we've been though. So many years – we know it, you know it, everyone knows it.

"It's a monkey off the back now and we'll just move on from here."

Goalkeeper David Marshall who saved magnificently from Aleksandar Mitrovic for a 5-4 sudden-death win revealed the referee told him not to celebrate as there would be a video assistant referee check.

Marshall said: "I just hoped and prayed that it didn't go to a retake because the lads were already on their way. They didn't know it was being checked probably.

"When you've waited 22 years what's another four or five seconds?

"It's almost a numb feeling, it's been so long. It's just a massive emotional feeling. Ryan Christie was in tears and it just shows how much it means to the lads to get there.

"Had we lost it it would have been gut-wrenching, but if you're going to do it that's the best way to do it. The lads scoring 10 out of 10 penalties under that amount of pressure is just incredible."