

Scotland's Nations League promotion hopes end with defeat to Israel

Scotland failed in their Nations League promotion bid with a 1-0 defeat against Israel in Netanya last night thanks to a goal just before the break from Manor Solomon.

Steve Clarke retained the same starting XI from the historic match against Serbia as his side searched for the win needed to top Group B2 in the Nations League.



The Scots were denied an early penalty after Ryan Christie was clipped in the box but the referee allowed play to continue.

The Celtic star then went close with a shot which flew narrowly over the bar.

Belgrade hero David Marshall was called into action and did well to smother Menachem's shot.

Former Livingston striker Lyndon Dykes went close before Declan Gallagher's header landed on the roof of Ofir Marciano's net.

John McGinn and Callum McGregor combined to set up Stephen O'Donnell but the Motherwell defender dragged his effort wide.

A stunning save from Hibernian keeper Marciano then denied former Hibs man McGinn from giving Scotland the lead then the hosts took the lead against the run of play when Solomon

wrong-footed Scott McTominay and fired a left-footed effort beyond Marshall.

Scotland continued to press forward and McGinn's effort was blocked after good play from Christie then Marciano was called into action again with a fine save from O'Donnell.

Steve Clarke made a double substitution on the hour mark replacing Dykes and McGinn with Oli McBurnie and Leigh Griffiths.

Griffiths quickly teed up McGregor on the edge of the box but his shot was blocked then with 20 minutes remaining Kieran Tierney's looping cross nearly found the top corner, but Marciano tipped it over the bar.

Clarke made another double substitution in the 73rd minute, replacing Motherwell duo O'Donnell and Gallagher with Oliver Burke and Scott McKenna.

Scott McKenna and Griffiths both missed chances then Scotland had a penalty claim denied when the ball struck Dasi's outstretched arm and Marciano managed to turn it round for a corner to prevent an own goal.

In the dying seconds Marciano produced a fine save to deny Griffiths and Israel took the three-points.

After the final whistle Clarke told BBC Scotland: "We shouldn't forget how far we've come. But we also know how far we've got to go if we want to be regularly successful and regularly qualifying for tournaments.

"We have to be better, we have to improve."

All eyes are on the FIFA World Cup Qualifier draw that takes place on 7 December.

Israel: Marciano, Dasa, Menachem, Bitton, Natcho (Golasa 62'), Zahavi, Solomon (Cohen 84'), Yeini (Dgani 78'), Weissman, Lavi

(Abu Fani 78'), Tibi

Unused subs: Harush, Peretz, Khalaila, Tawatha, Dadia, Hanna, Nitzan

Scotland: Marshall, O'Donnell (Burke, '73), Robertson, McTominay, Gallagher (McKenna, '73), Tierney, McGinn (Griffiths, '61) Jack, Dykes (McBurnie, '61), McGregor (McLean, '82), Christie

Unused subs: McLaughlin, Gordon, Taylor, Cooper, Shankland, Palmer, Considine