

Hockey – Burnet double claims World Cup semi slot

Fiona Burnet claimed a glory double as Scotland's women booked a World Cup qualifiers semi-final slot against Wales on Saturday (14.30) after a convincing 3-0 quarter-final victory over Poland in Pisa, Italy.

Sarah Jamieson (pictured) of Edinburgh club side Watsonians added a third to late-on to secure the win against a side ranked No 23 in the world, four places underneath the Tartan Hearts.

Coach Chris Duncan stayed behind to watch the Italy v Wales clash and Sarah Jones netted the game-winner for the side from the Principality after 18 minutes with a rasping drive into the bottom left hand corner of the net. It was an upset as Italy are rated No 17 in the world and Wales No 25.

Reflecting on the win, Duncan said: "We started on the front foot and took the game to them.

"Overall, this was a team performance from those both on and off the pitch who have helped us prepare for this very tough tournament. You can't afford to slip-up if you want to reach the World Cup and that was the first of potentially three cup finals for us."

Edinburgh-based Duncan added: "We were resolute in defence and did not allow the Polish side to get into the game and to create proper chances.

"However, we have three totally different games in this tournament and I am proud of the way the girls adapted to playing this tough Polish side who have really experienced players in their squad. We now have to adapt to playing Wales."

Scotland took the game to the European combine from the start but the tough Polish side denied them until the 19th minute when Burnet, who plays for London side Wimbledon, netted close in.

She added her and Scotland's second after 36 minutes, bravely deflecting the ball into the net at the far post and Jamieson, a former player with Dundee-based Grove Menzieshill, coolly lifted the ball high into the net from a tight angle on the left to complete the scoring.

The three-goal cushion allowed Duncan to introduce Jess Buchanan, who plays for Athletic Terrassa in Spain, in the dying minutes to give her major tournament experience.

Earlier, Ireland, with six debutants in their squad but ranked No 12 in the world and the top ranked side in the tournament, beat France, who were No 27 in the world, 4-1 and Belarus, ranked 21st in the world, hammered Russia, ranked No 20, 7-1, reversing a recent 5-0 win by Russia. Ireland now meet Belarus in their semi-final.

One team qualifies from the event for the World Cup in Spain and The Netherlands from July 1 to 17 next year.

Meanwhile, in Cardiff, Scotland's men suffered a major blow when they were edged 3-2 in a shootout by Austria, seeded fourth in the tournament, one place above the Scots, after the sides were locked at 0-0 at full time.

RESULTS: World Cup qualifiers: women: Scotland 3, Poland 0; Ireland 4, France 1; Russia 1, Belarus 7; Wales 1, Italy (in Pisa, Italy)

World Cup qualifiers: men: Austria 0, Scotland 0 (Austria win 3-2 after shootout) (in Cardiff).