

Coach Duncan praises Scotland women after victory over strong Irish side

Test match: Ireland 1, Scotland 2 (in Belfast)

Scotland women turned the world rankings upside down when they claimed a 2-1 win over and Ireland team ranked six places above them.

Sarah Jamieson (Watsonians) and Fiona Semple from Glasgow-based Clydesdale Western claimed the goals in an excellent performance as the Tartan Hearts started their campaign towards the Commonwealth Games and EuroHockey qualifiers this summer.

Chris Duncan, Scotland's head coach, said: "It's a pleasing start for us. We came out with an exciting attacking style and our commitment in defending was as good as I've ever seen from the squad.

"Our first-half performance in particular was excellent and we could have scored more. We slowed down in the second-half, so we know we can build on that, but all-in-all it's a great start to the three-match series and a good platform to build on."

Scotland play two other matches against the Irish side on Sunday and on Tuesday but their impressive early tempo caused the home side real problems. Scotland were rewarded for their enterprise when Jamieson found the net in the opening quarter to give the visitors a deserved lead.

Olympic bronze medallist Sarah Robertson (pictured, orange bib) who plays for London club Hampstead & Westminster, was heavily involved, beating two players and unleash an effort at

goal however it was going wide but Jamieson was in the right place at the right time send the ball into the net.

The second quarter saw Scotland go 2-0 ahead and the goal came from Scotland's excellent press. The ball was won high up the pitch by Fiona Burnet who picked out Katie Robertson on the baseline. She found Fiona Semple who finished off a delightful three-pass move.

Heather McEwan was denied by a sensational double save to keep the score at 2-0 but Ireland were not out of this and at the other end Scotland's goalkeepers, Jess Buchanan and Nicola Cochrane, both pulled off excellent penalty corner saves low to their left to keep Ireland out.

With five minutes left Ireland found the net, but the Scots, ranked No 18 in the world, held out to record a confidence-boosting win in Belfast against a side ranked No 12 in the world.