

Rugby – Scotland Women v USA Women – 2022 Summer Test Series

In the first of two Summer Tests before jetting off to New Zealand for the 2022 Rugby World Cup, Scotland lined up to face the USA Eagles at Edinburgh Rugby's DAM Health Stadium.

This match would give the Scots a chance to test themselves against the Number 5 side in World rankings to where they stood in the grand scheme of things.

And they appeared to stand quite tall as they absorbed some early pressure from USA before driving upfield to score a try after six minutes.



Lana Skeldon opened the scoring for Scotland© 2022 J.L. Preece Full back, Chloe Rollie had been illegally impeded to give Scotland a penalty in the opposition 22. Going for the line, they won the line out and the subsequent driving maul dragged

hooker, Lana Skeldon over the line for the opening try.

No. 10, Helen Nelson, then converted for a 7-0 lead.

The visitors then came back with an attack of their own, which eventually resulted in a 13th minute penalty in front of the posts which full back, Alev Kelter slotted home for 7-3.

Three minutes later, they were up in the Scots' faces again following a series of rucks across the home 5-metre line. The defence held for a time but, eventually the battering found a gap allowing Hope Rogers (top image) to go over to the left of the posts for 7-8.



Scotland's Chloe Rollie (15) was a power in defence © 2022 J.L. Preece

Then, in what was turning out to be a bit of an end-to-end match, Scotland crossed the whitewash for their second try.

The backs were responsible for this one and a cross-field passing move ended with a long, looping pass from Lisa Thomson out to Rhona Lloyd on the wing. The No. 14 then used her speed to see off two defenders before sliding into the corner for

the try.

Nelson then stepped up and secured the extras with a difficult, touch line conversion for 14-8 after 17 minutes.

The match then settled down for a while, but USA managed to add a penalty to their tally through the boot of stand off, Gabby Cantorna, for 14-11 after 25 minutes.



Rhona Lloyd followed Skeldon across the line for Scotland's second try. © 2022 J.L. Preece

The remainder of the half was dominated by the visitors as they probed the Scots' defence for a weak spot, coming close when No. 8, Kate Zachary, was 'held up' over the line. The pressure didn't ease there, though as Thomson sent the goal line drop kick out on the full, awarding a five-meter scrum to USA.

Pressure eventually told as half time crept near. A set of swift hands saw the ball across to the right and into the hands of Zachary and this time there was no stopping the back row as she swept aside Scotland's Hannah Smith to dive over for the try and 16-14 with three minutes left on the clock.

Right on the hooter, Scotland, having worked their way back to the opposition 22, were awarded a penalty which Nelson saw home for a 17-16 lead at the break.



USA's Kate Zachary scoring for the lead just before the break
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Both sides passed up chances to score in the first 20 minutes, or so, of the second half when lock, Hallie Taufouu, was put in the clear by Zachary, only to drop the ball when Rollie got a hand to her short of the line.

Scotland, for their part managed to get the ball over the line 'in hand', but were deemed to have been 'held up' by referee, Joy Neville.

However, it was getting increasingly clear that USA were gaining the upper hand and on 63 minutes, prop, Hope Rogers, forced herself over for a try. Setting up from a penalty award for a maul infringement – itself as a result of penalty line out – she took a quick tap and scored from short range.



Scotland made USA work for the win © 2022 J.L. Preece
The conversion was missed, but it was 17-21 with 15 minutes left.

As the match drew to a close, and following a flurry of substitutions, Scotland's Lloyd almost repeated her try of the first half, but this time the defence were on the ball and she was dragged to the ground a few metres short of the line.

All-in-all, a decent showing by Scotland against a side five places above them in World Rankings and another good performance – and, hopefully, a win – against Spain (13th) in a couple of weeks will be a confidence-builder going into the 2022 World Cup