

# Scots brush Austria aside and now for France in EuroHockey qualifiers

EuroHockey qualifiers: Scotland 4, Austria 0; France 2, Switzerland 0 (in Dunkirk, France)

Ruth Blaikie made her senior international debut as Scotland cruised to a 4-0 victory over Austria in their opening game in the EuroHockey qualifiers in Dunkirk, France.

They play the hosts France on Thursday and Scotland, ranked No 18 in the world, will need to up their game to beat a French side, ranked No 25, who opened their campaign with a 2-0 victory over Switzerland, rated No 40, at the same venue.

Perth-raised Blaikie, who plays club hockey and has just graduated in liberal arts and sciences in Amsterdam, Holland, was pleased to get her chance and is determined to ensure that the Scots qualify for the top tier of international hockey.

She did not look out of place in the senior side after starring for the under-21 side in the recent European Championship recently in Ghent.

Glasgow-born Jess Buchanan earned her seventh cap, coming on in the second-half, only hours after jetting in from Barcelona after seniors regular, Nicola Cochrane, was injured in training on Tuesday. The Scotland under-21 international made a telling stop when she came and did well in the game to preserve the shutout.

Goals by Amy Costello, Jennifer Eadie, Fiona Burnet and Sarah Jamieson secured the win, but coach Chris Duncan said he had mixed feelings about the result.

He was pleased that two of the goals had come from flowing

moves and two following penalty corner awards, but was not pleased that his squad became sloppy allowing the Austrian side, rated No 31 in the world, back into a game which Scotland dominated in the early stages.

Costello converted after two minutes, firing home in the bottom left hand corner, from a penalty corner earned in their first attack and Eadie doubled the advantage eight minutes later sending the ball home low from their second penalty corner award giving the goalkeeper no chance.

Burnet finished a flowing move to claim No 3 five minutes into the second quarter and it was 4-0 early in the final quarter when Jamieson finished off a fine move involving Heather McEwan.

Duncan said: "The girls know that they became sloppy and we will have to be better on Thursday against the French. We are the top seeds here and we can't afford to lose a game here and that was the first of our cup finals.

"The second is against France who, on paper, will provide our toughest opposition. The girls were not happy with their performance against Austria and they know they can be better."

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