

Late strike denies 'brilliant' young Scots in Ireland

Ireland broke Scotland hearts with a last-gasp equaliser in the third and final Test in torrential rain in Belfast. Perth-born Ruth Blaikie, who plays club hockey in Holland, fired the young Scotland squad ahead in the final quarter only for Ireland to score with 30 seconds remaining.

Chris Duncan, Scotland's head coach, said: "It was another brilliant performance in very challenging conditions. The rain was torrential, but we were still able to play fluid, exciting hockey.

"For such a young team to perform like this against a top side in Ireland is very pleasing. Of all the great results we've had this year, these performances have to be up there, and to see this young squad gelling and learning together so quickly, the future is bright."

The Irish are ranked No 13 in the world with Scotland at No 17, but the Tartan Hearts have drawn twice and lost once against their highly-ranked opposition on this trip.

Earlier, Scotland started strongly created a number of chances. They tested the Irish goalkeeper keeper and Georgia Jones (The University of Edinburgh) was denied by a fine save as Scotland pressed.

Captain Sarah Jamieson (Watsonians) had a powerful effort fizz just wide of a post and another fantastic save in the second-half denied Watsonians player Emily Dark from a penalty corner that looked destined for the bottom right.

Ireland upped their game and put Scotland on the back foot

with around 25 minutes to go, but Duncan's side dug in and in the final quarter Scotland looked threatening on counter attacks.

It was from a quick break that they opened the scoring. The attack began on the edge of Scotland's D and the ball was quickly transferred forward down the left.

Heather McEwan, who plays her club hockey in Belgium, picked out Jamieson in the circle before the Watsonians player found Ruth Blaikie at the far post to finish but, with 30 seconds left, Ireland forced an equaliser.

PICTURE: Heather McEwan and Sarah Jamieson (facing camera) celebrate