

Rugby – Scotland v Italy, Rugby League World Cup 2021*

Scotland opened their Rugby League World Cup 2021 campaign against Italy at Newcastle Falcon's Kingston Park stadium.

Match favourites, the Scots were hoping to avoid their 2017 last place finish with a good result against their opponents and both sides had taken advantage of the availability of Super League and NRL players to bring some experience to the fixture.

Six minutes in, that 'good' result looked to be on the cards as Scotland crossed the line, but the video referee consultation decided that the ball had been lost in a goal line melee, so it was 'No Try'.



Scotland enjoyed some early pressure on the Italian line © 2022 J.L. Preece

Italy, however, were just warming up and, less than five minutes later, Luke Polsetti scored their opener for 4-0. Radean Robinson slotted a neat grubber through the defence which Polsetti followed through and, after another interminable video consultation, he was awarded the try.

Stand-off, Jack Campagnolo then converted for 6-0.

The game then settled into a period of relative stalemate with neither side being able to threaten the try line until Italy opened up the Scots defence again when dummy half, Dean Parata, went in under the posts. With Campagnolo's conversion, it was 12-0 with less than 15 minutes to play.



Italy had the majority of territory in the first half © 2022 J.L. Preece

Italy wasted another couple of chances close in and Scotland managed to pile on some pressure with a string of penalties, but there was no further scoring before half time.

Scotland did, however, make their job a bit more difficult when their captain, Dale Ferguson, was sin-binned just before the break for a dangerous tackle.

Four minutes into the second half, Italy scored their third try of the match. Forcing a goal line drop out, they got the ball wide to Jake Maizen who took two Scots over the line with him to score in the corner. The successful conversion they made it 18-0.



Jack Campagnolo kicked four successful conversions from five attempts © 2022 J.L. Preece

A few minutes later, he was over again for his second try and 22-0.

By this time, the Scots were coming under severe pressure and were struggling to get out of their half, but they managed to rally and started to pressurise the Italian defence, just failing to score on a couple of occasions out wide.

But it was all for naught when Maizen collected a loose pass and sprinted 80 metres own the field to score his hat-trick. Campagnolo then converted for 28-0 with six minutes left to play.



Lachlan Walmsley scored Scotland's only points of the game late on. © 2022 J.L. Preece

Whether Scotland found their feet, or Italy took theirs off the pedal, Scotland scored in the final few minutes through Lachlan Walmsley, when the No. 5 neatly side-stepped his way over the line for the only Scots' points of the game.

Final score Scotland 4, Italy 28 with the Scots now facing the prospect of World Champions Australia next weekend in Coventry.

**Remember all that Covid stuff..?*