

Young Scots praised by coach after draw with Ireland

Scotland's women's squad, minus a number of leading players, earned a highly-creditable 2-2 with the Ireland development squad in Belfast in the first of a three match series.

The going gets tougher when Scotland, with a number of rising stars from the under-21 national squad, face the full Ireland senior side in games on Sunday and Monday, but coach Chris Duncan was proud of their performance.

Scotland understandably struggled to get a foothold in the game and went 1-0 down before half-time through a penalty corner but they re-grouped re-grouped and came out strongly.

Their endeavour was rewarded following a quick breakaway down the left and McKenzie Bell (Sevenoakes) was in the right place at the right time at the right post to prod home to level.

Scotland pressed hard and maintained a high tempo, particularly around the Irish D, and Watsonians player Emily Dark (pictured) fired the Tartan Hearts ahead with a fierce shot into the bottom right corner for 2-1.

Amber Murray made some key saves to keep the home side at bay but the young Scots tired towards the end and Ireland rallied to equalise through another penalty corner.

Duncan, who doubles as head of hockey at The Edinburgh Academy, said: "I'm immensely proud of the performance from such a young squad, with so many debutants, and it's a great developmental opportunity to blood the young players emerging from the under-21 squad.

"There are things to work on, but we're very pleased with the learning and development we've seen already in this series.

It's been a positive night."