

Scotland joy at breaking 12-game losing streak

Players hugged, those from the bench rushed onto the pitch, and over 3,500 celebrated on the terracing at the DAM Health Stadium as Scotland kept their cool despite an Italian comeback to earn their first victory in this season's TikTok Women's Six Nations.

The 29-21 win, helped by two tries each from Lana Skeldon and Leah Bartlett, snapped a 12-match losing run, but a red card in the second half to an Italian substitute, who had only joined the action minutes earlier, certainly helped their cause against a plucky visitors who were only 10-7 adrift at the break.

This memorable result followed heavy defeats to England and France and a home reverse to Wales, and Christine Belisle said that after a lot of low lows this feels like such a high."

She added: "It is an incredible feeling. Italy put up a fight and this (victory) was well earned."

Scotland made a solid start and earned their reward when Louise McMillan broke the deadlock. The Italian team, who beat Ireland on their last outing, hardly helped their cause by making early mistakes, but they regrouped and Alyssa d'Inca hacked forward, but as the wing attempted to gather the ball it slipped agonisingly from her grasp. The chance had gone.

But the world's No 5 ranked nation picked themselves up from the disappointment to edge ahead through a Giada Franco try and Michela Sillari converted.

Italy lock Giordana Duca was yellow carded and then Lana Skeldon pounced, touching down to give Scotland a three-point cushion at the break.

This proved a massive boost and Scotland kicked-on when Lisa Thomson fed Leah Bartlett who stretched over from close in. Bartlett added another thanks to a rolling maul.

Nelson converted on her 50th cap to increase the scoreline to 24-7 but Italy refused to buckle and they had the crowd on the edge of their seats with an impressive comeback.

Sara Tounesi scored a try to kick-start the momentum swing. Full-back Vittoria Minuzzi broke free and sliced through the Scottish defence to find Viottoria Vecchini who touched down under the posts for 24-21 and set up a nerve-jangling finish.

But a red card for Sara Seye for a high tackle on Jade Konkel-Roberts hit them hard and the 14 players found it difficult to cope with Scotland. Skeldon scored after another rolling maul and they kept their cool to claim the confidence-boosting win and a bonus point. It was their first since beating Columbia last February.

Now Scotland entertain Ireland at 7.30pm on Saturday, April 29, the final match of the Women's Six Nations, and tickets are available.

England top the table with 20 points from their four games with France second with 14 points and Wales third with ten points while Scotland move up to fourth with five points.

Italy have four points with Ireland propping up the rest after failing to record a point in their four matches so far.

LIBRARY PICTURE: Scotland celebrate at DAM Stadium. Picture courtesy of Scottish Rugby