

Praise for Scotland women despite China defeat

Scotland coach Chris Duncan praised his women's hockey squad following good performances against two of the world's top ten teams during four games in The Netherlands as they prepare for the EuroHockey Championship.

China won 3-0 in the final game in Amstelveen following a 3-2 defeat 24-hour earlier to a side ranked seven places above Scotland, ranked No 17 in the world, and, of course, the Tartan Hearts lost 2-1 and 5-1 to Australia, ranked No 3 in the world, earlier in the week.

Scotland now face the Czech Republic in two matches as Peffermill in July and head coach Duncan said: "By the time the Czech Republic come to Edinburgh I'm confident we'll be in a really good place."

He described Saturday's game against China as a good lesson in what it takes to be a top ten side and he added: "After an excellent performance (in the 3-2 defeat) it's hard to back it up the next day when you play top teams.

"That's something we'll need to learn. We pushed them back in the second-half, and it's frustrating not to score, but it's pleasing to see that we kept coming back at them."

Overall, he said: "There are a lot of positives to take away from this week. We've had some excellent performances against two of the top teams in the world and we've seen what's expected of us if we want to be one of these top sides."

Scotland created good chances against China but couldn't find the net while China was clinical on the counter attack but it took their rivals until deep into the second quarter to break the deadlock.

A penalty corner found the net to make it 1-0, which was how things remained at half-time. In the second-half the Scots kicked on and pushed China back.

Katie Birch had had a penalty corner effort denied and Heather McEwan also had a penalty corner deflection blocked before China went 2-0 ahead late in the third quarter China and Scotland lost a third late in the to end the contest.

PICTURE: Heather McEwan in action for Scotland by ***Nigel Duncan***