

Scots under pressure after narrow Italy defeat

Scotland were edged 3-2 in men's EuroHockey Championship II in Dublin and the pressure is now on as they face Turkey in their final pool match with a semi-final spot on the line.

The Blue Sticks, who beat Switzerland 3-0 in their opening game, went behind through an early goal following an attack down the right finished from close range by Davide Guiliani, but Scotland looked dangerous on the counter.

Experienced Alan Forsyth (pictured) and Struan Walker were a threat and Scotland started the second quarter positively, pinning Italy back through some creative passing.

They were rewarded with a penalty corner and Jamie Golden fired a drag flick into the roof of the net to equalise.

Scotland increased the pressure but failed to break through again before the break, however they edged ahead early in the second half through Kyle White who took a good touch at the top of the D and unleashed a ferocious effort, on the reverse, into the top right corner.

Italy, however, bounced back to level through a Davide Arosio deflection, but Scotland reacted well and Craig Falconer zipped the ball to the baseline for Forsyth who tried to pick out Andy McConnell who just failed to connect.

The Scots kept on coming and Walker hit a post but, as the clocked ticked down, a Thomas Keenan penalty corner squeezed its way into the Scotland net to make it 3-2.

A Golden drag flick flew just over the bar before the Scots withdrew their goalkeeper and the gamble nearly paid off when Walker drove in to deflect the ball towards goal but the

Italian goalkeeper made a pod save and that was that.

Italy top Pool B with six points from two games and a goal difference of five while Scotland are second with three points and a goal difference of two with Switzerland third. They also have three points and a goal difference of zero while Turkey, beaten 5-2 by the Swiss side, are pointless and prop up the four-strong pool with a goal difference of minus seven.

Pool A sees Ireland top with three points with Ukraine second also with three points and an inferior goal difference of three against Ireland's nine, with Portugal third on zero and the Czech Republic also pointless in fourth.