

Joy over TV football deal

The BBC has secured exclusive live television rights to all of Scotland men's international football matches in the run up to next year's World Cup – in a move welcomed by the Tartan Army.

Free-to-air live coverage is to return to the BBC in the deal, which has been hailed by supporters as “brilliant news” which will “give everybody a lift”.

The move finally brings to an end fans' misery at having to shell out on subscription channels to cheer on their Scots heroes from home, while being able to watch England games for free on terrestrial TV.

The deal, agreed with European football's governing body UEFA, will include all 14 live Scotland matches, across all the European Qualifiers to the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Coverage begins with Scotland's away match versus Greece on 20 March as the UEFA Nations League play-offs get underway.

Hayley Valentine, Director BBC Scotland, said: “I'm so excited that millions of Scotland fans will now be able to enjoy free-to-air access to all Scotland's international matches.

“Bringing our audience together is at the heart of BBC Scotland's work and I know nothing ignites passion here more than live international football.

“We've been working on this agreement since I started as

Director last Autumn and it was crystal-clear from day one that people across Scotland wanted to see their national team back live on free-to-air television.

“I’m delighted we’ve been able to deliver.”

BBC iPlayer

The matches will be shown on BBC One Scotland and BBC iPlayer, with key fixtures also being broadcast across the UK.

The programmes will add to existing live international coverage on BBC Radio Scotland and the BBC Sport app.

The deal adds to the BBC’s extensive football coverage in Scotland of the SPFL, Scottish FA Cup and Scottish Championship across television, radio and online.

The BBC’s broadcast agreement also includes Wales and Northern Ireland men’s international matches – the first time the broadcaster has secured live rights for all three of the UK’s devolved nations.

Ian Maxwell, Scottish FA Chief Executive said: “We are delighted that BBC Scotland has come to agreement with UEFA for the rights to televise our Scotland Men’s National Team on a free-to-air basis.

“It complements their existing coverage of the Scotland Women’s National Team and, beyond that, their overall commitment to the domestic game in this country.

“When it became apparent the rights could become available, we championed the potential for free-to-air coverage to reach as many Scotland supporters as possible and we are grateful that BBC and UEFA could reach agreement.”

Iain Emerson, editor of the Famous Tartan Army Magazine, said: “It’s brilliant news, absolutely brilliant. For too long, fans

have been missing out on watching the national team.

“This gives everybody the opportunity to watch the team. It will get the whole country behind them, which will boost the feelgood factor when we win.

“Football should be accessible for all. You can’t beat the live experience but the cost for families and kids all mounts up. Now everybody will be able to watch the games again, which is fantastic.

“Scotland’s games are still selling out and often people can’t get tickets for home or away matches so everyone wins with this deal.

“It’s going to give everyone a lift. We just need to beat Greece now and we’ll be laughing.”

Musician Ted Christopher, whose live shows have entertained supporters before Scotland matches since 1990, said: “It’s great. All Scotland matches should be free to view.

“I’m one of the privileged ones who gets to go to games but a huge number of people can’t afford it or can’t get tickets, and they should not have to face a paywall to watch on TV.

“A lot of folk only have ‘council telly’.”

Scottish Greens claim the win

A campaign led by Scottish Green MSP Gillian Mackay to bring back free-to-view football gathered nearly 10,000 signatures. Ms Mackay also raised it with BBC Scotland’s Chief Executive in a parliamentary evidence session.

Ms Mackay said: “This is a great result and will be celebrated by fans all across Scotland. I am delighted that we will finally be able to watch the run up to the next world cup on free-to-view telly.

“The Scottish Greens have joined supporters groups in calling for this for years, with thousands of people signing our petition and urging the BBC to take over the contract.

“It’s a really important day for our national sport. Football should be for everyone, not just for those who can afford to enjoy it from behind a costly paywall.

“Ticket prices are skyrocketing and simply getting to the ground is now out of budget for many. I hope that fans and families across our country will now have the option of watching our national team from home.

“At its best, sport brings communities and families together like nothing else. I hope that free-to-view TV can become a permanent fixture and that young people will be able to grow up watching their heroes in action for years to come.”



GLASGOW, SCOTLAND – NOVEMBER 15: Scotland’s John McGinn (left) celebrates scoring to make it 1-0 during the UEFA Nations League 2024/25 League A Group A1 match between Scotland and Croatia at Hampden Park, on November 15, 2024, in Glasgow,

Scotland. (Photo by Ross Parker / SNS Group)