

Report

ITALY v SCOTLAND

Treviso, Italy

Saturday 24 January 1998

Final Score: 25-21 (Half Time 9-18)

Referee: David Davies (WRU). Touch Judges: Robert Davies, Huw David (WRU)

1. Introduction

This fixture was played at the Benetton Treviso Stadium (Stadio Monigo) on a cold, sunny day. The pitch was bare, well-sanded and provided firm underfoot conditions. The game was officiated by a WRU referee. The ground was full (approximately 9,000 spectators) with no spectators at either end of the ground. There was an excellent atmosphere at the ground. The game was televised and was broadcast as a live-game in Scotland.

2. Italy

The Italian team contained most of the players we have met in recent years. There are some new faces at fullback (Pilat), centre (Stoica and Martin), and prop (Castellani and Carli). Italy did not use any substitutes in this game but Arancio replaced Sgorlon late in the game for injury (dead-leg). Brief comments on each player are included at the end of this report.

3. Scotland

Scotland's selection for this game seemed to indicate a team in transition. By the end of the game they were a team in disarray. The final scoreline flattered Scotland.

4. Overall Impression

Italy dominated this game. The final winning margin does not reflect the extent of their dominance. They were nine points behind going into the final quarter of the game and yet were focused, confident and determined. Scotland led 18-9 at half time following two intercept tries. Shepherd charged down/caught Pilat's chip in Scotland 22 when Italy had a 3v2 overlap and Tait intercepted Dominguez's long cut out pass off his left hand. On both occasions Italy had set piece possession. Dominguez kept Italy in sight of Scotland with three penalty kicks.

Italy dominated the second half in terms of possession and territory. Scotland broke their stranglehold once and won a penalty after Tait had cut through the midfield. Italy have developed a 'new game' approach to their play. They were secure at set piece play, carried the ball well and retained possession effectively. They were determined to win the game and had an intense final quarter encamped in the Scottish 22 for long periods of time.

The Italian game was characterised by:

1. Dealt well with conventional kick off and restart plays.
2. Competent scrum with No8 in slot.
3. Continuing with 'Italy' plays off back of scrum.
4. Dominguez is using ball more in running plays. Played with inside (Martin) and outside (Stoica) centres. Stoica is a physically big player.
5. Dominguez uses Vaccari (14) as a penetrator from BSW and occasionally used Pilat (15). He uses them in and out but more usually 'in' off his inside shoulder.
6. Italy had good continuity skills and took the ball up low and dynamically (the one major exception was Martin at inside centre, he was very upright in contact and a real turnover target. Both props worked hard to carry and hit up. In fact the whole pack had a good work ethic. Giovanelli (6) is the captain and leads by example whilst Gardner (8) ran their scrum game very effectively. They carried the ball on good angles with scissor ball helping them to generate momentum.
7. Croci was their main lineout forward in full and shortened four man lineouts
8. They have a number of established and well worked strike moves off scrum and lineout ball.
9. They were relatively well disciplined. They were penalised throughout the game at ruck play particularly for coming into the side of the ruck. Their diving in as third man was less penalised but it is a characteristic of how they secure ball. Giovanelli (6) is particularly keen to play this way.
10. Italy kicked infield effectively and won a large amount of ball in the air. Troncon (9) kicked right footed, Dominguez (10) right footed and Pilat (15) left footed. Dominguez works away at opponents with penalties at goal but watch Troncon (9) who seems much more ready to mobilise the game than in previous encounters. Dominguez will drop at goal when field position and game state permit.

In summary, I would rank Italy as third behind England and France in the threat posed to Wales this season. They exuded confidence from the moment of arrival at the ground, they had an excellent warm up (mainly running) and sustained the desire (and expectation) to win throughout the game. They are also a skilled team.

The THREATS they pose are:

- hard working pack
- back row plays at scrum, particularly Gardner (8)
- strike plays off scrum and lineout
- use of BSW particularly Vaccari (14) to penetrate
- ability to win ball in air from kicking game
- ball continuity and retention
- Dominguez goal-kicking

5. WEAKNESSES and OPPORTUNITIES

I thought Scotland were predictable and failed to dominate the game. They received the Italian game rather than made their own. **Wales should consider:**

- A varied kick off and restart game
- The use of set piece play to develop channels to attack
- Tight, focused scrummaging to tie in their loosely bound 6/7/8
- A varied lineout game that mixed off the top ball with dynamically driven ball against their no defence plays
- Cut Italy in midfield at 10/12
- Move Pilat (15) around with precise kicking game
- Emphasise our discipline and control in all aspects of play
- Dispute possession at their carrying game, step up and turn ball carrier from low body position. Isolate ball carrier.
- Be aware of their 'third man' role at contact.

This confirms the pattern established against New Zealand. Italy are keen to keep the ball infield and will attempt to counter. Our well-pressed kicking game will be important.

The fixture at Llanelli will provide an excellent Five Nations game. Italy are a much improved team. Collectively they play well together. Our success will require us to impose our game and disintegrate their pattern. They have played **seven games** together since October.

We must win both halves of our game and do so by focus, control and impact. A big result for Wales will have enormous effect on France, Scotland and Ireland who have recently played Italy. **Italy come to Llanelli on equal (and better terms) than Scotland and Ireland.**

Keith Lyons
26 January 1998

Italy

Shirt	Name	Age	Caps	Height	Wt	Comment
15	Pilat	23	2	180	80	Left footed. Keen to counterattack. Positional sense?
14	Vaccari	27	47	182	86	Outstanding. Strong in contact. A key strike player.
13	Stoica	21	5	188	94	Big, strong running outside centre. Tended to carry rather than distribute?
12	Martin	24	3	184	86	Workmanlike. Inside centre. Upright carrying ball into contact.
11	Cuttita	31	50	179	84	Elusive, determined player works hard to stay infield. Takes scissors to straighten lateral play.
10	Dominguez	31	41	171	76	A catalyst for Italy. Passes the ball more now with confidence. Constant presence with kicking at goal
9	Troncon	24	31	177	80	Has matured. Good right foot and defended well at scrums. Able to mobilise game from tap ball.
8	Gardner	33	19	192	98	Ran the game from base of scrum. Intelligent footballer.
7	Sgorlon	30	32	180	95	Hard working open side. Worked hard to get to Townsend and apply pressure
6	Giovanelli	30	43	185	105	Charismatic figure. A real 'dog'. Works hard for ground ball.
5	Croci	32	23	199	100	Main lineout presence. Slight but effective
4	Cristofolletto	33	15	190	100	Hard working team player. Some lineout ball
3	Castellani	25	9	191	115	Determined ball carrier
2	Orlandi	30	39	182	100	One handed throw. Experienced member of hard working pack
1	Carli	27	3	183	107	Appetite to carry and be involved. Took opportunity to establish himself

Pontypridd v Northern Transvaal, Welsh Challenge Trophy, 17 January 1998

Scoring Sequence

[illegible]

Italy v Scotland

January 1998

Observation Notes

Italy v Scotland

KOR

00.00	It No	DOMINGUEZ elevated kick short left 5/15 channel. Unhappy Scotland in scramble and attack. Scotland misdirect and find hole when vaccaresi. Kicking game.
02.55	It KOR	DOMINGUEZ elevated kick short left a 15m. Italy able to challenge for ball. Scotland deflect and retain. Able to drive ball up (slowly). Box kick. Goal catch by MARTIN
05.30	S DO	Elevated misdirect short kick to 510m. CROCI collects. Maul to spin harm channel PILAT keen to take ball up @ speed. Game misdirected DOMINGUEZ was 'in' ball to CASTELLANI.
8.55	It DO	DOMINGUEZ 5/15 channel almost to 10m. Scotland catch guy back CHRISTAMER pointing. Good picture of Italian defence. NB PILAT commits himself early?
10.45	It DO	DOMINGUEZ elevated kick a 15m 22/10. No Scotland catch!! Ball bounces back for Italy.
17.10	S KOR	Elevated kick almost 15m 22/10 a scramble. Scotland in volley ball! Attack immediate 4v3
18.45 18.45	It DO	DOMINGUEZ elevated kick a 15m @ 22/10. Italy challenge Scotland take.
23.05	It KOR	DOMINGUEZ elevated short kick near 5m ~ 14m. Italy challenge in air. Whistle.
28.45	S KOR	Short up 5m @ 10m. CROCI catches a left but juggles ball for 5 to 10m.
31.15	1 KOR	DOMINGUEZ short left a 10m 5/15m. Italy negates busy ball Move to STOICA for midfield set
33.00	S KOR	On 15m line near 22 left right - GIOVANELLI catches. Maul working to 10m. TRONCON elevated right foot kick to box for vaccaresi
38.55	100	DOMINGUEZ long left to 510m IL 5/15 channel. It in front!!
2H		
48.35	S KO	Deep to 1R ~ 22 a 15m. TRONCON receives kick right footed infield. Excellent long kick to touchline right footed 510/22. Kicking tennis. PILAT diagonal left kick to left
52.40	S DO	Long to 1 right of 11. Counterattack to 110. PILAT/VACCARESI ulu. right footed.
56.00	S KOR	Short to 1R ~ 12m a 5m catch by CROCI maul/drive. Set play 10 'u' to 14.
58.25	S DO	Short/wide to 1R. Italy in and maul/drive.

KOR(2)

1.01.40 500

Not shown. Overbay kick. Note look to by VACCARI angle.

1.09.10 1KOR

DOMINGUEZ elevated kick 5/15 22/10. Weir tapped down. Italy penalized for tackling player in air (~~mean~~) CHRISTOPHERSSON

1.11.20 8KOR

Sliced kick? in field of 15m near 22. Italy catch and ~~convert~~ convert. DOMINGUEZ right footed kick to right touchline & 10 in channel. Pressed kick. PILAT Sustained penalized.

NB DOMINGUEZ and TRONCONI have kicked here for KOR. We can place players?

1.27.25 8KOR

Elevated kick 5/15 22/10. Caught by Italy. DOMINGUEZ kick to 10 on IR in 5m at 1st touch.

NB TARGET here.

Scrum Game

- 03.40 It S. It 10/22 It R
GARDNER i slot. 9/10 open for right forked into left hand deep.
Scrum right/open. Well pressed kick. Italy gain field position.
- 06.10 It Ssc. S22/10 It R
GARDNER i slot v defence. GIOVARELLI blind/right.
TRONCON prepared to take narrow channel defence.
- 8.05 It S It 10/10 It L
GARDNER i slot. Scrum right/open. Intended 8 pushing feet to 12?
Free-kick v TRONCON not straight.
- 11.55 S S S10 It R
GARDNER i slot. GIOVARELLI right/blind. TRONCON is already right channel
with VACCARI. Italy defend No 8 push up and run open.
Scotland initiate and draw penalty.
- 5.05 It S It 10/10 It R
GARDNER conventional Scrum right/blind. Scrum binds breaks early
8/9 i narrow right channel TRONCON kills but has PILAT & VACCARI outside
Right forked kick down 5/15 channel. Well pressed kick by PILAT.
- 17.55 S S It 22 It L
GARDNER i slot, Scrum left/blind. Up a 1 unless Scotland 8 knock hole
between GIOVARELLI & TRONCON open.
- 20.40 It S J10 It R
Not shown but Scrum blind/right for 'Italy'? Round to end open a GARDNER
feels 9 in pocket 10 and 14 available. TRONCON dummies? Looks to hit
12 feet? Italy develop play to S22 & PILAT chips left forked into
Shepherd's hands!! Try to build back for Italy attack. Outman VACCARI.
- 3.15 It S S10 It L
GARDNER i slot. TRONCON press feet 9/12 to cut Scotland defence.
Can we defend this by having our 10/12 study together to push for inside out.
MARTIN into between 10/12.
Italy in build game. NB Ball i available to CATTI (11) as well.
- 24.00 It S S22/T M
'Italy' move. Not shown!! Is Scrum & Not a GARDNER slot.
More becomes a 'copy' with right kick in a ball channel through 10.
10/12 scrums back. Continuing. NB VACCARI in a 68 in left side.
- 24.45 S S S22/T It L
DOMINQUEZ show to go to left channel defence. Can we increase tempo?
GIOVARELLI right/open? GARDNER i slot.
- 29.15 S S It 10 It R
Good pushed Italy defence. Drive against ACT move. Game unhinged
DOMINQUEZ injury not pass! Intercepted for Test try. 6-13 6-15 ✓
- 37.10 S S 110 It L
Not shown GIOVARELLI right/open. 10/11 i left channel.
So not pushing but behind gain line.

Screen Game (2)

- 39.20 Ss 1522 M Italy split defence 10/12/11 left. GIOVANNINI right / rpu. GARDNER i shw STORON neither bowed with head up. Unconvinced play by S but draws penalty i 1522.
- 53.25 1s 510 1L GIOVANNINI left / blue GARDNER i shw: Itaka scan for bank. GARDNER puts up and dynamic no for line. Machine game i 522. STORON holds a rather 12 delivers 2v1?
- 1.02.40 1s 522 M GIOVANNINI left. GARDNER i shw. Scoring bank 8/9 right channel attack 13th missed ball!!
- 1.03.30 Ss 522/110 1R DOMINANT defence warm channel. Ca wedy 8/9 left??
- 1.05.20 Ss 110 1L Wideleft scan defence. Good picture of defence. Under ball but Scotland cut before 10/12 for TATI. PIRAT puts. Speedy.
- 1.14.20 1s 11W M GARDNER i shw, GIOVANNINI 1000. Right channel set play 9/10 8'in' Italy return ball and move ball back left. Weak tackling and panic kick take Italy to left and line. Speculated a throw.
- 1.17.40 1s 522 M GARDNER i shw, GIOVANNINI left / m Easy ball 8/13 right channel continuity is under right ball infield. Sustained pressure to corner (44ms)
- 1.20.10 15s 55 1R GIOVANNINI left / rpu GARDNER i shw STORON moves late to No 8 Re 'Italy / Copy' infield
- 1.21.45 1s 55 1R Move repeated. Can we produce dynamic screen? Italy not a unit for 50 mins to score try! Disallowed.
- 1.25.10 1s 510 1R Move set up for push ball to 9 rpu To hit 10/14 'in'. gain line play. Then excellent midlt. Ball kept infield to S Sa 11. Scotland penalised.
- 1.28.30 1s 510/22 M GARDNER i shw. Pick up and re stopped behind gain line. Italy not ball and angle kick to corner (STORON) right footed.

Lineout Game

00.55	SLo	10 10 10 R	7 man	TRONCON @ home ORLANDI @ SH @ rear of lineout. <u>No defence</u> Scotland lose control of ball.
01.15	10 Lo	10 10 10 R	7 man	Ball back to CROCI @ 4/7. NB CASTELLANI @ BINANONI indicate ball? CROCI watches ball @ 1! Elevated throw. Scotland double lift too early. Two handed catch ball driven.
07.15	SLo	10 10 10 R	7 man.	ORLANDI starts out @ home to indicate lift defence but then runs to SH !! Big lift in WAINWRIGHT @ 5/7 defeats poor Italian lift = CROCI 4/7 Scotland drive very effectively to release running back play. Dummy screen 10/12 pop straight 13. Good pickup Italian defence.
11.35	10 Lo	10 10 10 R	<u>4 man</u>	Lineout after penalty. Carls Cas Chr. Ball back to CROCI @ 2/4 Long walk back on off top. NOT STRAIGHT. NB. See RUNNING play set up. VACCARI 'in' 10/14 & midfield wedge
11.55	SLo	10 22 10 R	7 man.	Italy set up for no defence. ORLANDI @ SH @ 6. Scotland are unlikely against crowded Italy drive.
13.50	10 Lo	10 10 10 R	7 man.	Lineout after penalty. Ball forward for CROCI @ 4/7. Check Giovarelli and Castellani? CHRISTOPHERS dummy @ 2/7. Check CROCI @ 1. Body punter. Ball caught and driven. RUNNING play 9/10/14 quick hands. DOMINGUEZ excellent pass.
14.55 25.20	10 Lo	10 22 10 10 L	<u>4 man</u>	Variati: Castellani Christofalotti CROCI 6/10. Ball back to CROCI @ 3/4 off top. Pick up midfield runner!!
27.05	SLo	10 22 10 L	7 man	Italy double lift defence. Pop lift 2/7 Grumelli 4/7. ORLANDI search half.
34.00	10 Lo	10 10 10 R	7 man	Ball back to CROCI @ 4/7. Scotland double lift is too early Cataland driven CROCI. TRONCON box kick to cover right foot to SS in 10.
35.00	SLo	10 22 10 R	7 man	Italy catches but no defence. ORLANDI @ SH @ 6 Game unresolved.
36.35	SLo	10 10 22 10 L	4 man.	Scotland try 4 man reverse. Italy on !! Italy have too many players @ lineout.

Lineout Game (2)

2H

49.55 1LO 122 1L 7man

Ball back e 217 to CHRISTAFALITO. Note CARLI e 1 not looking at kmv.
CROCI drums back at 4. Two handed catch and drive.
More man to clear to DOMINICAN for clearance kick (slided!!).

50.40 SLO 122/10 1R 7man.

No defence. ORATORIO e 511. Scotland use back. Good pickup of defence.

57.00 SLO 522/10 1R 7man.

Ball intended for 517 not straight. No defence!!

1.00.50 1LO 522/10 1R 4man

Layback ball e 214 to CROCI off top.

Set play 9/10 runs 1 13 6/7 wedge 8 15 11
Committing for field point for dry goal attempt.
Sidekick pickup e (1.01.35 4 more)

1.04.25 1LO 11W 1L 7man.

Note CARLI e 1 looking ball! Ball intended back e 417 for CROCI. Play!!

1.13.50 SLO 510 1L 7man.

No defence. Scotland in off top e 417. Poor pass for Armstrong open up
TOWNSEND & SUTTON. Knock n.

1.16.45 SLO 510/22 1L 7man.

No defence for ball e 217. Caught and driven.
Armstrong box kick not pressed. Chaotic play Italy in semi a throw.

1.19.30 SLO 550 1R 7man.

No defence. Props are square n. Thro' to pressure Townsend to minor
for 1180 sec.
NB. Can this lineup provide space and time?

~~minutes~~ h

1.24.50 SLO 510 1R 7man

No defence. Scotland drove caught ball and break free but
accidental offside.

1.29.20 1LO 522/10 1R 7man.

Ball intended by way back to CROCI e 417. Plays. Note
gap between CROCI & GIMMERS. Scotland in over.

Penalties and Free Kicks

05.10	15 pm	S22/10	15 L	DOMINGUEZ kicks for San Luis under 10' left post.
16.45	15 pm	S22	15 R	" @ goal ✓ 3-3
25.35	15 pm	S22/10	15 L	THOMSON quick to get ball for top. Dummied into space.
28.10	15 pm	S22	15 L	DOMINGUEZ mega goal ✓ a 15m 6-8
32.35	15 pm	10m	R	" ✓ 9-15
2H				
55.22	15 pm	S22	1 R	DOMINGUEZ mega goal ✓ 12-18
1.11.00	15 pm	S22	1 R	" ✓ 15-21
1.11.50	15 pm	S10	1 R	THOMSON takes quick top. GIOVANNINI takes ball up strongly. (10/12 runners. Siffert pleased.)
1.12.10	"	S22	1 R	THOMSON takes top. First ball to forward DOMINGUEZ tries to run back. Next ball to MARTIN upright. NB. Italy drive w a floor. Penalised.
1.21.00	15 pm	S5m	1 R	THOMSON takes quick top while attention diverted!! Attack to lose.
1.25.35	1 pm	S5m	1 R/L	THOMSON quick 9/8 to quick run 9/14 down for TRY. VACCARI.
1.31.05	1 pm	S22	R	DOMINGUEZ mega goal ✓ 25-21

Other Points / Aspects of Play

1. Scrum Game

Can we dominate the scrumming game to provide platform? Can we use channel attackers creatively? We need DISCIPLINE, FOCUS and COMMUNICATIONS.

2. Lineout Game

Can we mix and match as lineout ball for strong driving plays? Italy are very vulnerable here. Front feed opportunities?

3. Scanning

We can create and use 3v2. We can also turn PIAT. His defensive line leave gaps behind. If w don't he can put ball back behind him.

4. Cutler right footed under pressure (19.25)

5. Can Italy legally deal with ruck ball? Tend to (i) dive in (ii) play ball with hands.

6. Gain line play. Part of impact, part of breakdown.

7. TOWNSEND missed important tackle & penalty 1.09.40 and gave Italy opportunity to counter with PIAT and VACCARI. STOICA worked to support. Scotland offside & ruck line.

8. Italy mugged cheerleader!! GIOVANNINI was knee & feet dead CHRISTIANATO grabbed his feet!

