

SCOTLAND 1 AUSTRALIA 2

26 Jan 2023

Scotland lose out to a well organised Australian team in their first International of the season yesterday at New Western Park.

The Australia Schools FA team has, for some years, organised a bi- annual UK tour for their boys and girls squads. This was disrupted due to Covid , but they were delighted to return this week to Scotland and particularly pleased to return to New Western Park, Renfrew, home to Renfrew Juniors FC for a game against the SSFA under 18 boys squad.

For Scotland it was a great chance to see how their 2023 squad performed in a competitive international game before their Centenary Shield campaign begins.

It was the team from ' Down Under' who earned a hard fought 2 – 1 victory on the 25th of January but the SSFA team showed continuing progress as they come together as a new squad.

In bright sunshine the Australian team started faster at the early kick off time of 11.00am. Playing in their fifth game of their tour the physically strong and slightly older visitors looked dominant in the first twenty minutes and Scotland had to work hard to keep the score at 0 – 0.

Gradually, though, the Scots wrestled some control with Nathan Cannon looking a good threat up front. Keeper Ethan Mitchell looked secure as Australia mounted their attacks. He did have to thank defender Andrew Miller for making two fantastic tackles in the box to deny the Auzzie forwards.

Scotland lost full back Callum Hannah to a slight ankle strain meaning that Jayden McGivern came on with James Carnihan switching sides.

Half-time: Scotland 0 Australia 0

Scotland made a further three planned substitutions at half time and Corey Armour took over in goal for his first match having recovered from a slight injury.

Scotland were now competing on equal terms in the fast moving game but were disappointed to go behind around the hour mark.

A strong tackle at the edge of the box saw Australia awarded a free kick twenty five yards out. The visitors played in a dangerous cross and Jesse Poti headed home a powerfully to open the scoring.

Scotland, marshalled well at the back by captain Harris Clubb, never gave up and tried to battle back in to the game.

They were rewarded when Ricky Waugh, who had played really well, netted from a free kick after 80 minutes to give Scotland a deserved equaliser. Waugh's twenty five yard hit was deflected, but was nothing more than Scotland deserved.

Unfortunately for the home team it was Australia who grabbed the winning goal.

Only a minute or two after their equaliser the OZ team were awarded a penalty. Scotland players protested the decision, but Australia's Liam Boneti kept his focus to score from the spot. Keeper Armour did get a hand to the penalty but couldn't keep the powerful strike out.

Scotland tried to the end but Australia kept them out to record a hard fought win.

Scotland have a final preparation game on 14th February when they take on the u 20 students at Stirling University at 2.00pm.

Then it's the start of the Centenary Shield campaign when they play Republic of Ireland, again at New Western Park, Renfrew on Thursday 23rd February at 7.00pm.

Scotland: Ethan Mitchell, James Carnihan, Andrew Miller, Harris Clubb, Callum Hannah, Nathan Smith, Martin Campbell, Rick Waugh, Joe Prior, Nathan Cannon, Aaron Nocholson.

Subs – all used: Corey Armour, Jayden McGivern, Ruaridh Cant, Calum Gemmell, Daniel Mason-Bone, Lewis Downie.

Lucas Stenhouse has had to withdraw from the squad having taken up the opportunity to sign a professional contract at Livingstone FC. Good luck to Lucas in his new career.

Starting Eleven

Scotland's Goal