

IRB

statistical review and match analysis

RBS 6 NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP 2006





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• France celebrate their 2006 RBS 6 Nations success.

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commentary

LAST YEAR'S CHAMPIONSHIP

Last year's RBS 6 Nations Championship, played in 2005, was a fascinating competition. At first sight, the 2005 tournament appeared pretty unremarkable. On the surface at least, there appeared little change from recent years with all constituent playing elements remaining more or less constant - points scored, ball in play, numbers of lineouts, scrums, penalties and so on were similar to previous years.

Underneath, however, things were different.

The 2005 tournament was one of contrasts and extremes - both from match to match and also from team to team. Not only was it a tournament that proved yet again that possession was not a guarantee of success, it was a tournament where one team - Wales, the winning team - showed a noticeably different pattern of play from the rest. It was playing a game that was strategically different from the other teams:

- their forwards made far more passes than any other country
- more Welsh forwards than backs scored tries
- the whole team passed at a higher rate than any other country (i.e. they made more passes per minute)
- more tries were scored from inside their own half than England, France and Ireland combined
- more tries were scored from opponents' handling errors than England, France and Ireland put together.

What was going to be particularly exciting in this year's 6 Nations therefore was to see if Wales would maintain its distinctive approach to the game; whether it would remain successful; whether any other team would adopt or move towards the Welsh style of play or whether they would maintain the characteristics that they displayed last year. Similarly, would England, for example, still be the country that passed the most, rucked the most and kicked the least?

The answers were nothing if not interesting.

THIS YEAR'S CHAMPIONSHIP

The first conclusion soon became clear - just as in other recent tournaments, England's results confirmed again that possession was no guarantee of success. In the 2005 and 2006 tournaments, for example, England's possession outstripped their opponents in 9 of their 10 matches, and sometimes by as much as 60-80%. Despite this, in each of the years, England lost more matches than it won. France, on the other hand - and Wales last year - had less possession than their opponents in the majority of their matches and yet won the championship.

But what of **Wales** this year - last year's Grand Slam winners?

Despite a losing record, major characteristics from last year were still there;

- Wales' forwards made more passes than any other team's forwards despite having noticeably less possession than some
- the Welsh half backs still made proportionately fewer passes than any other teams
- the Welsh team passed at a higher rate (i.e. more passes per minute) than the other 5 teams.

What proved difficult this year however was turning possession into points. Wales' try count almost halved. They were simply not able to score tries from inside their own half and from opponents' mistakes and kicks as they did last year. Five of Wales' 9 tries, for example, came from lineout possession with 7 of them coming in the first 35 minutes of play. Further, they conceded almost twice as many tries. While last year, it required almost 12 minutes possession to score a try against Wales, this year that figure come down to just 6 minutes. So while maintaining the same pattern of play, success in 2006 proved far more elusive.

England also disappointed their supporters. Despite obtaining far more possession than their opponents as mentioned earlier, they were unable to turn possession into points. Once again, their try count went down as it has in each of the last 6 years and for the first time in 7 years England scored fewer tries than penalty goals.

commentary



WALES V ITALY

- *Ramiro Pez kicks off for Italy during the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between Wales and Italy at The Millennium Stadium on March 11, 2006 in Cardiff, Wales.*

This could perhaps suggest that their strategic approach was similar to recent years - and it was. England were again the highest rucking team in both numbers and rate of rucking. Their forwards made relatively few passes when compared to other teams. Their forwards were only half as likely to pass the ball as Wales' forwards with their front row two and a half times less likely. They were still a relatively high passing team however but almost half their passes were made by their scrum half. England also remained a team whose clear majority of tries came from set piece possession as opposed to broken play.

As for **Ireland** however, the 2006 championship was, in several ways, very different from last year.

- In 2005, they obtained less possession than any other team.
- In 2005, they made fewer passes than any other team.
- In 2005, they made fewer rucks and mauls than any other team.
- In 2005, they kicked more than any other team.
- In 2005, their forwards passed less than any other team. Only 9% of Irish passes were made by the forwards and they made only 49 in the whole of the championship.

In RBS 6 Nations 2006, how things changed.

- From being the lowest passing team, Ireland became the highest. From 106 passes per game last year, the figure this year shot up to 161.
- In the second half of one game, they made the highest number of passes ever - 153 against France.
- From obtaining the least amount of possession in 2005, only England obtained more in 2006.
- They were the second highest rucking team as opposed to the least rucking team last year and rucked at a rate that was only fractionally less than England.
- Last year, they were the highest kicking team - this year, only England kicked less.

There was one area however where there has been relatively little change - and that was the number of passes made by the Irish forwards. Together with Italy, only 12% of Ireland's passes were made by their forwards (albeit a 33% increase on last year) - and there were periods in a game when remarkably few were made. In the second half against Italy, for example, 6 of the Irish forwards did not make a single pass between them - and the 2 who did only made 1 pass each.

Nevertheless, there was a hugely different strategic approach from Ireland this season which may well have been a contributory factor in Ireland winning the Triple Crown.

Scotland had a far better season in 2006.

They did however, score fewer tries than last year and were the least effective team in turning possession into points. Conversely, however, they achieved an extremely high kick at goal success rate. What did change however was their defence.

In 2005, their defence was one of the weakest in the championship, conceding a try for every 4 mins 30 secs possession obtained by their opponents. This year saw a huge improvement. Together with France, their opponents needed over 14 minutes possession to score a try - a three-fold improvement.

With regard to a playing approach, unlike last year, and far from being top, their rucking rate was lower than average. Furthermore, their passes reduced dramatically when compared to last year. From an average of 147 per game, the figure this year dropped to 117.

Their forwards however were still more likely to pass the ball than any other team apart from Wales. Scotland's second row were more likely to make a pass than any other teams' second row, the likelihood of their front row and back row passing was second only to Wales and noticeably exceeded those of most other countries. Distribution of the ball was therefore spread more evenly throughout the team.

Italy were also considered to have had a far better championship.

They still however conceded more tries than any other team aside from Wales - but a lot less (22 down to 14) - with their opponents' tries coming in the latter part of the game. In fact, in 4 of their 5 matches, they were leading in the early stages of the second half.

As in 2005, obtaining possession continued to be a problem. They obtained 20% less possession than the next lowest team and over 40% less than England. Not surprisingly therefore, they were by far the lowest passing and rucking team.

They also made more kicks than their opponents in 4 of their 5 matches and, unlike the other teams, kicked restarts long on almost every occasion. In addition, they made almost as many drop goal attempts as the other 5 teams combined. Their forwards were more likely to pass the ball than England's and Ireland's but were a lot less likely than Scotland and Wales.

What happened this year however was that, despite obtaining relatively little possession, Italy defended far more effectively until late in the game and ran the opposition close on more than one occasion.



2006 RBS 6 NATIONS CHAMPIONS - FRANCE

- *Florian Fritz of France is congratulated by team mate Damien Traille after scoring the winning try during the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between Wales and France at the Millennium Stadium on March 18, 2006 in Cardiff, Wales.*

And what of **France** - the 2006 champions?

RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006 saw certain modest changes in the French approach.

- There was a small increase in the number of rucks per game although they remain a low rucking team
- There was also a small increase in the number of passes they made this year, and they did make slightly more open play kicks than any other team
- The number of passes made by their forwards remained considerably less than Wales but slightly more than England and Ireland.
- They were however the only team where the number of backs scoring tries did not exceed the number of forwards scoring tries.

All in all, France were not a team who stood out statistically in any particular aspect of play. They were not the highest passers, kickers, ruckers, obtainers of possession, and were not distinctive or exceptional in which players distributed the ball.

What they did do however, was convert possession into points far more effectively than any other team and make the opposition work exceptionally hard in scoring tries - a formula that all but guarantees success.

summary

This Summary is divided into two sections.

Section 1 takes a brief look at constituent elements in the 2006 tournament and compares them to 2005. It also looks at the overall game as reflected through this year's RBS 6 Nations Championship.

Section 2 looks at how the individual countries performed in certain critical areas in 2006.

Section 1

THE 2006 CHAMPIONSHIP

In many of its core elements, this year's championship showed little change from 2005 as shown in the following comparisons:

AVERAGE	2006	2005
POINTS PER GAME	42	45
TRIES	4.1	4.7
PENALTY GOALS	4.9	4.4
DROP GOALS	0.3	0.5
PASSES PER GAME	276	264
RUCKS/MAULS	149	147
KICKS PER GAME	63	62
LINEOUTS PER GAME	37	34
SCRUMS PER GAME	19	20
PENALTIES PER GAME	21	20
BALL IN PLAY	46%	44%

As mentioned in the Commentary however, the above figures hide a number of extreme contrasts and interesting trends that are covered more fully in the main report.

The following data also comes from the detailed report that follows and provides a picture of the modern game as expressed through this year's RBS 6 Nations championship.

- **48%** of all points came from tries (2005-53%).
- **35%** came from penalty goals (2005-30%).
- **17%** came from conversions and drop goals (2005-17%).
- Tries averaged just over 4 per game (2005-5).
Penalty goals averaged almost 5 (2005-4.5).
Drop goals averaged around 1 every 3 games (2005-1 every 2).
- **72%** of tries were scored by backs (2005-70%).
28% were scored by forwards (2005-30%).
- **42** individual players scored tries in the 15 matches (2005-53).
- **40%** of matches had scoring margins of 9 points or less (2005-50%).
- Over the last 6 years, penalty goals have come down from 93 to **73**.
- Conversion success rate was **74%** (2005-66%).
Penalty goal success rate was **72%** (2005-65%).
Drop goal success rate was **31%** (2005-29%).



ENGLAND V IRELAND

- Gordon D'Arcy of Ireland is tackled by Andrew Sheridan of England during the RBS Six Nations Championship match between England and Ireland at Twickenham on March 18, 2006.

- Almost **70%** of matches were won by the team scoring most tries (2005-70%).
No game was won by the team scoring the fewer number of tries.
- **38%** of tries came from lineout possession (2005-38%).
- **21%** of tries came from inside the scoring team's own half (2005-28%).
- Match time averaged **91m 34s** (2005 - 91m 24s).
- Ball in play time averaged **46%** (2005 - 44%).
- **40%** of all passes were made by backs (2005-42%).
44% of all passes were made by the scrum half (2005-43%).
16% were made by the forwards (2005-15%).
- Almost **80%** of passing movements contained 2 or fewer passes (2005-80%).
- At short restarts, only around 1 in 5 were retained (2005 - 1 in 5).
- Lineout possession retained was **84%** (2005-86%).
- Scrum possession retained was **95%** (2005-94%).
- There were no free kicks for crooked scrum feeds (2005-none).



**RBS 6 NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP
- TRIPLE CROWN 2006**

• The Irish team celebrate as Captain Brian O'Driscoll holds the Triple Crown aloft, following his team's victory in the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between England and Ireland at Twickenham on March 18, 2006.

- **46%** of penalties were awarded for on ground offences at the ruck/tackle area (2005-43%).
- There was 1 red card (2005-none), 9 yellow cards (2005-5), 11 references to the TMO (2005-8) and, on average, 10 substitutes per game (2005-10).

Section 2

THE TEAMS' PERFORMANCES

This section summarises each team's activities and performances in certain critical areas of the game. Again, further and far more extensive analysis can be found in the main report.

The number of tries scored by each team, the number conceded by each team and the number of penalty goals kicked is shown in the following table:

	TRIES SCORED (2005)	TRIES CONCEDED (2005)	PENALTY GOALS (2005)
FRANCE	18	13	7 6 12 14
IRELAND	12	12	10 9 17 14
SCOTLAND	5	8	7 20 13 12
ENGLAND	12	16	8 6 14 6
WALES	9	17	15 8 7 12
ITALY	5	5	14 22 10 8

The table below shows how effective each team was in converting possession into tries:

	MINUTES OF POSSESSION REQUIRED TO SCORE A TRY	2005
FRANCE	5 min 07 sec	6 min 34 sec
IRELAND	8 min 07 sec	6 min 42 sec
ENGLAND	8 min 52 sec	6 min 39 sec
WALES	9 min 58 sec	5 min 04 sec
ITALY	14 min 58 sec	16 min 33 sec
SCOTLAND	17 min 28 sec	11 min 22 sec

summary

Scotland were the most effective in preventing opponents from converting possession into tries but were run very close by France as shown below:

MINUTES OF POSSESSION REQUIRED BY OPPONENTS TO SCORE A TRY 2005		
SCOTLAND	14 min 08 sec	4 min 38 sec
FRANCE	14 min 04 sec	14 min 30 sec
ENGLAND	9 min 34 sec	13 min 03 sec
IRELAND	8 min 50 sec	9 min 41 sec
ITALY	7 min 00 sec	4 min 13 sec
WALES	5 min 48 sec	11 min 47 sec

Each team's kicking success rate was as follows: (penalty goals and conversions)

KICKING SUCCESS RATE 2005		
SCOTLAND	89%	70%
WALES	78%	71%
IRELAND	75%	77%
ENGLAND	72%	52%
ITALY	67%	50%
FRANCE	64%	70%

The average time in possession of the ball by each team is shown in the following table:

AVERAGE TIME IN POSSESSION OF BALL 2005		
ENGLAND	21 min 18 sec	21 min 17 sec
IRELAND	19 min 30 sec	16 min 04 sec
FRANCE	18 min 27 sec	17 min 05 sec
SCOTLAND	17 min 23 sec	18 min 12 sec
WALES	17 min 57 sec	17 min 14 sec
ITALY	14 min 58 sec	16 min 33 sec

Activities

- **England** made more rucks/mauls than any other team.
- **Italy** made the least.
- **Ireland** made more passes than any other team.
- **Italy** made the least.
- **France** made the most kicks.
- **England** made the least.

When it came to the rate of activity (ie rucks/passes/kicks per minute's possession) the order changed slightly however.

- **England** rucked/mauled at the highest rate.
- **Wales** passed at the highest rate.
- **Italy's** rate of kicking was the highest.
- In addition **Wales'** forwards made noticeably more passes than any other team's forwards.
- **Ireland** was the least penalised team.



IRELAND V WALES

- Marcus Horan of Ireland celebrates as Denis Leamy scores a try during the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between Ireland and Wales at Lansdowne Road on February 26, 2006.

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE - RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006

TEAM	PLAYED	WON	LOST	DRAWN	FOR	AGAINST	POINTS
FRANCE	5	4	1	0	148	85	8
IRELAND	5	4	1	0	131	97	8
SCOTLAND	5	3	2	0	78	81	6
ENGLAND	5	2	3	0	120	106	4
WALES	5	1	3	1	80	135	3
ITALY	5	0	4	1	72	125	1

MATCHES PLAYED - RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006

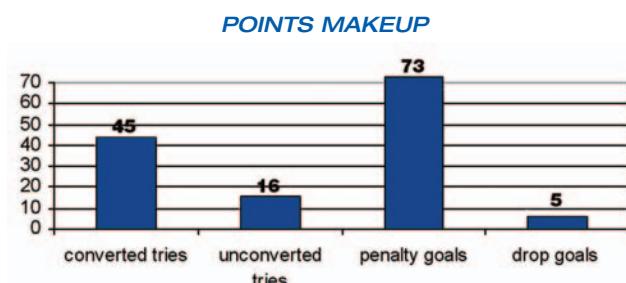
DATE	Fixture	RESULTS
18 Mar 2006	England vs Ireland	24 - 28
18 Mar 2006	Wales vs France	16 - 21
18 Mar 2006	Italy vs Scotland	10 - 13
12 Mar 2006	France vs England	31 - 6
11 Mar 2006	Ireland vs Scotland	15 - 9
11 Mar 2006	Wales vs Italy	18 - 18
26 Feb 2006	Ireland vs Wales	31 - 5
25 Feb 2006	Scotland vs England	18 - 12
25 Feb 2006	France vs Italy	37 - 12
12 Feb 2006	Wales vs Scotland	28 - 18
11 Feb 2006	Italy vs England	16 - 31
11 Feb 2006	France vs Ireland	43 - 31
5 Feb 2006	Scotland vs France	20 - 16
4 Feb 2006	England vs Wales	47 - 15
4 Feb 2006	Ireland vs Italy	26 - 16

1. scoring profiles

POINTS SCORED

a . There were 629 points scored in the 15 matches played. They were made up as follows:

POINTS SCORED IN	2006	2005
45 converted tries	315	329
16 unconverted tries	80	120
73 penalties	219	198
5 drop goals	15	24
TOTAL POINTS SCORED	629 pts	671 pts



b . The average number of points per game was **42** - down 3 points over 2005's average of 45. The last 6 year's figures have been: 53, 51, 47, 43, 45 and 42.

TRIES SCORED PER MATCH	
2001	5.0
2002	5.0
2003	5.0
2004	4.5
2005	4.7
2006	4.1

There was a small decrease in the average number of tries scored per game.

Tries accounted for 48% of total points scored, 5% lower than in 2004 and 2005.

d .

DROP GOALS SCORED PER MATCH	
2001	0.5
2002	0.2
2003	0.7
2004	0.2
2005	0.5
2006	0.3

Drop goals decreased from 8 to 5 in the 15 matches

e .

PENALTY GOALS AVERAGED PER MATCH	
2001	6.2
2002	5.9
2003	4.3
2004	4.6
2005	4.4
2006	4.9

Penalty goals averaged 4.9 per match, a slight increase over 2004.

f .

SUMMARY: average per match

Of the total points scored:

48% came from tries

35% came from penalty goals

14% came from conversions

3% came from drop goals

Points from tries therefore - unlike last year - did not exceed the total number of points scored from all forms of kick - penalty goals, conversions and drop goals, albeit the difference was very little.

SCORING PROFILE OF THE MODERN GAME

The following table shows the comparative figures for the 5 Nations Championships played in 1956, 1966, 1976, 1986 and 1996 - and compares them with RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006.

average per game	CONV. TRIES	UNCONV. TRIES	CONV. SUCCESS RATE
1956	1.1	1.6	41%
1966	0.7	1.3	35%
1976	1.9	1.2	61%
1986	1.6	1.8	47%
1996	1.7	1.3	57%
2006	3.0	1.1	74%

average per game	TOTAL TRIES	PENS	DROPS
1956	2.7	1.7	0.3
1966	2.0	1.6	0.3
1976	3.1	4.4	0.4
1986	3.4	5.8	0.6
1996	3.0	5.0	0.7
2006	4.1	4.9	0.3

WINNING MARGINS

The winning margins in each of the 15 matches fell into the following ranges:

POINTS MARGIN	MATCHES	CUMULATIVE	2005 CUMULATIVE
1 - 4	3	3 with 4 points or less	2
5 - 9	3	6 with 9 points or less	7
10 - 19	4	10 with 19 points or less	9
20 - 29	3	13 with 29 points or less	12
30 - 39	1	14 with 39 points or less	13
40 - 49	0	14 with 49 points or less	15
= draw	1		

40% of matches had margins of 9 points or less. (2005 -47%)

TRIES

The total number of tries and penalty goals scored by each country in the 2006 and 2005 RBS 6 Nations Championships was as follows:

	TRIES SCORED (2005)	PENALTY GOALS (2005)	RATIO (2005)
FRANCE	18	13	1.5:1 0.9:1
IRELAND	12	12	0.7:1 0.9:1
SCOTLAND	5	8	0.4:1 0.7:1
ENGLAND	12	16	0.9:1 2.7:1
WALES	9	17	1.3:1 1.4:1
ITALY	5	5	0.5:1 0.6:1

An interesting point to note is that **England's** total try count has declined in each of the last 6 years — from 29 in 2001, to 23 in 2002, 18 in 2003, 17 in 2004 , 16 in 2005 and 12 in 2006.

RATE OF TRY SCORING

The table immediately above shows the number of tries scored by each country.

The table does not show however how effective each team was in scoring tries in relation to the possession that it obtained. A team may obtain little possession but still manage to score a significant number of tries. The following paragraphs consider this and attempt to show how successful each team was in converting possession into tries.

This was done by adding together the time each team was in possession of the ball in each of the 5 matches played and then dividing it by the number of tries scored. The result then gave a rate of try scoring - in other words a measure of how effective each country was in converting possession into tries.

MINUTES OF POSSESSION REQUIRED TO SCORE A TRY			2005
FRANCE	5 min 07 sec	6 min 34 sec	
IRELAND	8 min 07 sec	6 min 42 sec	
ENGLAND	8 min 52 sec	6 min 39 sec	
WALES	9 min 58 sec	5 min 04 sec	
ITALY	14 min 58 sec	16 min 33 sec	
SCOTLAND	17 min 28 sec	11 min 22 sec	

MINUTES OF POSSESSION REQUIRED BY OPPONENTS TO SCORE A TRY			2005
SCOTLAND	14 min 08 sec	4 min 38 sec	
FRANCE	14 min 04 sec	14 min 30 sec	
ENGLAND	9 min 34 sec	13 min 03 sec	
IRELAND	8 min 50 sec	9 min 41 sec	
ITALY	7 min 00 sec	4 min 13 sec	
WALES	5 min 48 sec	11 min 47 sec	

The above figures show that **France** was some 60% more effective than any other team at converting possession into tries. What was also noticeable was the fact that **Scotland** - who ended up third with 3 wins - were the least effective team in turning possession into points. Despite winning three matches this year compared with one last year, they needed 50% more possession to score a try this year than last year. Conversely however, Scotland's opponents required 3 times more possession to score a try this year than last year as seen in the following paragraph.

RATE OF TRY CONCEDING

Following the above exercise, the converse was looked at ie. how effective was each team in restricting tries in relation to the possession that their opponents obtained.

This was done by adding together the total time the team's opponents were in possession of the ball - and then dividing it by the number of tries conceded. The result then gave a rate of try scoring by the opposition.



SCOTLAND V ENGLAND

- Chris Paterson of Scotland kicks a penalty during the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between Scotland and England.

The above table indicates that **Scotland** and **Italy** made a quantum improvement this year especially compared to **Wales** who conceded tries at twice the rate of last year.

PLAYERS AND TRIES

It has been noted above that there were 61 tries scored in the 15 matches. Of these tries:

2006	2005
72% of tries were scored by backs	70%
28% of tries were scored by forwards	30%

With regard to individual players that scored tries in 2006 and 2005 divided into backs and forwards:

2006	2005
27 backs scored tries	34
15 forwards scored tries	19

A total of 42 individual players therefore scored tries in this year's RBS 6 Nations Championship. This compares with 53 last year.

Only one country fell outside the pattern of more backs than forwards scoring tries - and that was **France** where 5 backs scored tries and 5 forwards scored tries. **Ireland** were closely behind with 4 forwards and 5 backs.

Italy and **Scotland** scored 5 tries each - all were scored by the backs.

PENALTY GOALS

Despite the slight increase this year to 4.9 per game from last year's 4.6, 2006 confirmed the continuing and diminishing reliance on penalty goals in the RBS 6 Nations championship. The extent of such a reduction is shown in the following table which shows the number of penalty goals kicked in the championship in each of the last 6 years:

PENALTY GOALS KICKED	
2001	90
2002	89
2003	65
2004	69
2005	66
2006	73

A further breakdown shows that this was the first time in 7 years for **England** not to have scored more tries than penalty goals. None of the other countries have come close to such a record. On all but a handful of occasions, the remaining 5 countries have consistently kicked more penalty goals than tries. This year was no different - only 2 teams out of the 6 scored more tries than penalty goals - **France** and **Wales**.

This is further illustrated in the following table which shows the total number of penalty goals kicked by each country over the last 7 years together with the total number of tries over the same period:

	PENALTIES KICKED	TRIES SCORED	RATIO PENS:TRIES
ENGLAND	85	133	0.6 to 1
IRELAND	108	95	1.1 to 1
WALES	83	79	1.1 to 1
FRANCE	112	98	1.1 to 1
ITALY	73	45	1.6 to 1
SCOTLAND	85	47	1.8 to 1

The above table shows that over the 7 year period since RWC 99:

France have kicked the most penalty goals
England have scored the most tries and
Scotland have the highest penalty goal to try ratio

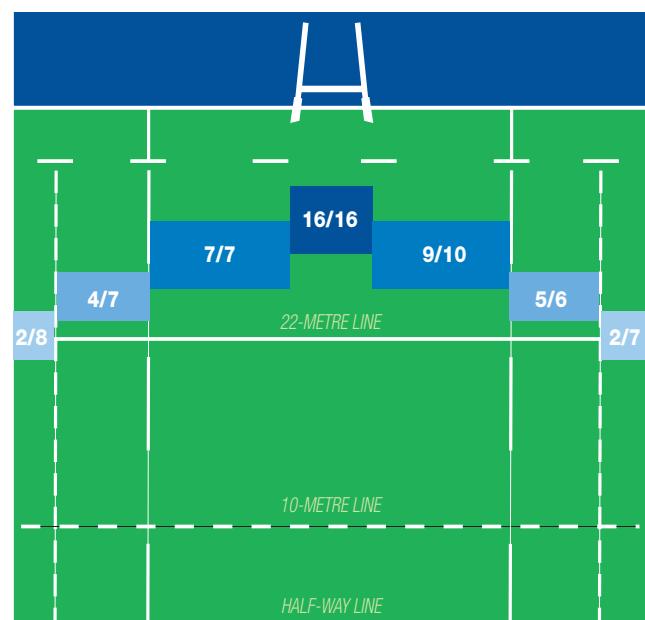
KICKING

KICKING SUCCESS RATES

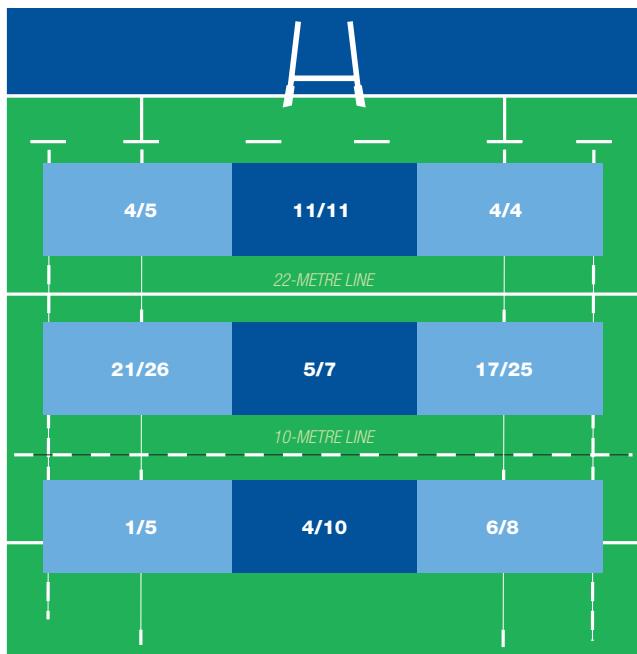
	2006	2005
CONVERSIONS	74%	66%
PENALTY GOALS	72%	65%
DROP GOAL ATTEMPTS	31%	29%

From a conversion success rate of 82% in 2000, the success rate declined to 66% by 2005 but has now recovered to 74%. The year on year figures are shown on the right.

As for 2006, the following charts show all successful and unsuccessful conversion, penalty kick and drop goal attempts during the 2006 championship.



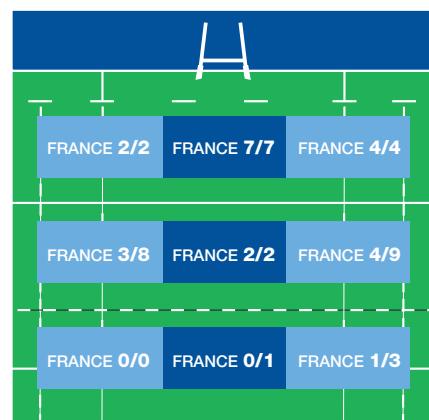
CONVERSION SUCCESS
2006 - 74% (2005 - 66%)



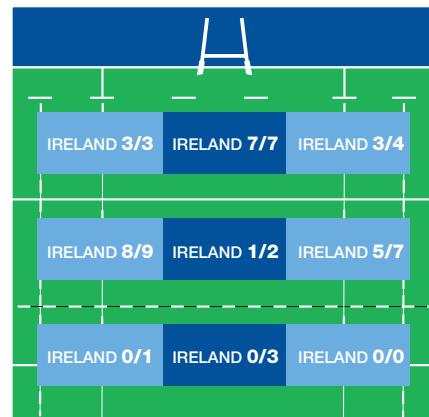
The kicking success rate (i.e. penalty goals and conversions) - of each of the participating countries was as follows;

	2006	2005
SCOTLAND	89%	70%
WALES	78%	71%
IRELAND	75%	77%
ENGLAND	72%	52%
ITALY	67%	50%
FRANCE	64%	70%

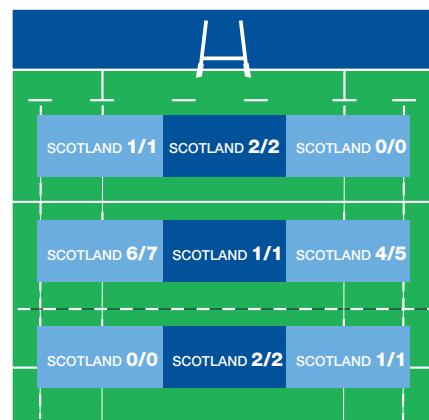
The following charts show successful and unsuccessful place kicks (i.e. excluding drop goals) for each country.



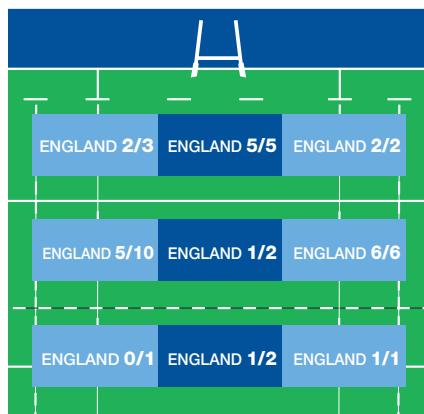
FRANCE - PLACE KICKS AT GOAL SUCCESS



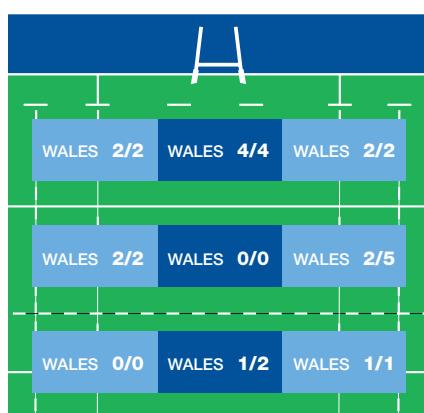
IRELAND - PLACE KICKS AT GOAL SUCCESS



SCOTLAND - PLACE KICKS AT GOAL SUCCESS



ENGLAND - PLACE KICKS AT GOAL SUCCESS



WALES - PLACE KICKS AT GOAL SUCCESS

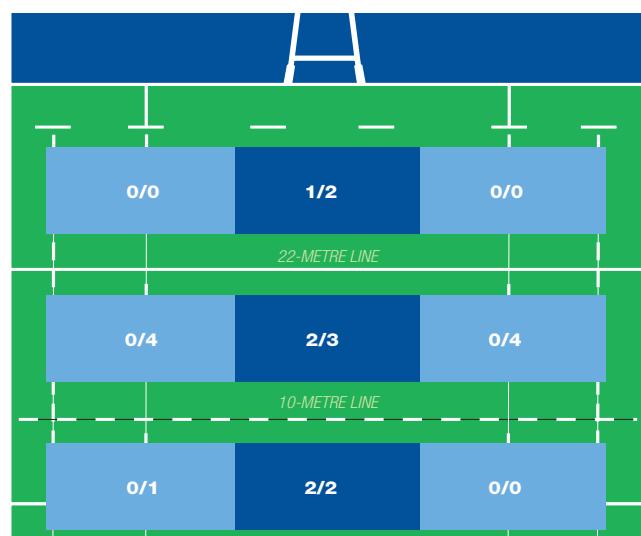


ITALY - PLACE KICKS AT GOAL SUCCESS

DROP GOALS

All teams made at least 1 drop goal attempt but only 2 teams were successful **Italy** and **Scotland**. **Italy's** 7 attempts almost equalled the total attempts of the other 5 teams. **Italy** were successful with 3 of the kicks.

The only successful drop goals were from those attempted from in front of the posts.



DROP GOAL SUCCESS
2006 - 31% (2005 - 29%)

KICKING SUCCESS RATES FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF PITCH

The success and failure rate of both conversions and penalties were combined in order to determine success rates from various parts of the pitch.

If the various areas are grouped into 3 (i.e. in front, right side and left side). The success rates are:

PITCH AREA	2006	2005
IN FRONT	82%	81%
RIGHT SIDE	72%	55%
LEFT SIDE	67%	68%

2. tries

TRIES SCORED BY WINNING TEAM

Of the 15 matches played in RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006, 10 were won by the team scoring most tries. In 4 games, tries were equal and there was one draw. This means that 67% of matches were won by the team scoring most tries - and that there was not a single occasion when the team scoring the fewer tries won the game.



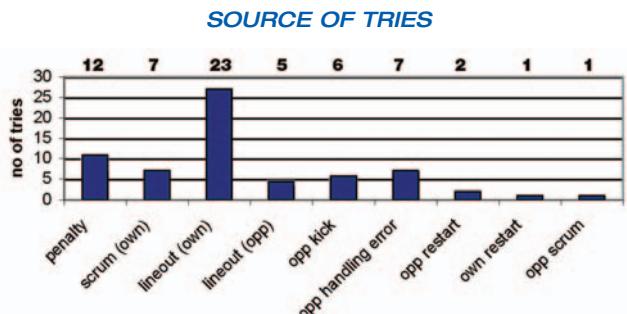
SCOTLAND V FRANCE

- Chris Paterson of Scotland scores a try during the RBS 6 Nations Championship Match between Italy and Scotland at the Stadio Flaminio on March 17, 2006 in Rome, Italy.

SOURCE OF TRIES

There were 61 tries scored in RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006 - 10 less than in 2004.

The teams scoring the tries obtained possession of the ball prior to the scoring of the try from a variety of sources. This is shown in the following chart and table:



POSSESSION SOURCE

	2006	2005
PENALTY	12	7
SCRUM - OWN	7	7
LINEOUT - OWN	23	27
LINEOUT - OPPONENTS	5	3
OPPONENTS' KICK	6	11
TURNOVER /		
OPPONENTS' HANDLING ERROR	7	12
OPPONENTS' RESTART	2	
OWN RESTART	1	1
OPPONENTS' SCRUM	1	
	61	71



Lineout possession continues to account for most tries. In 2006, tries from lineout possession remained at 38% of all tries with tries from penalties increasing.

Of the 6 tries scored from opponents' kicks, **France** scored 5. Last year, **Wales** scored 8 tries from opposition handling errors and opposition kicks which exceeded the total figure of 6 for **England, France and Ireland**. It was different this year with Wales scoring 5 of their 8 tries from lineout possession.

Eight of **England's** 12 tries (or 67%) came from the set pieces of scrum and lineout. **France's** figure on the other hand was 7 out of 18 (or 39%).

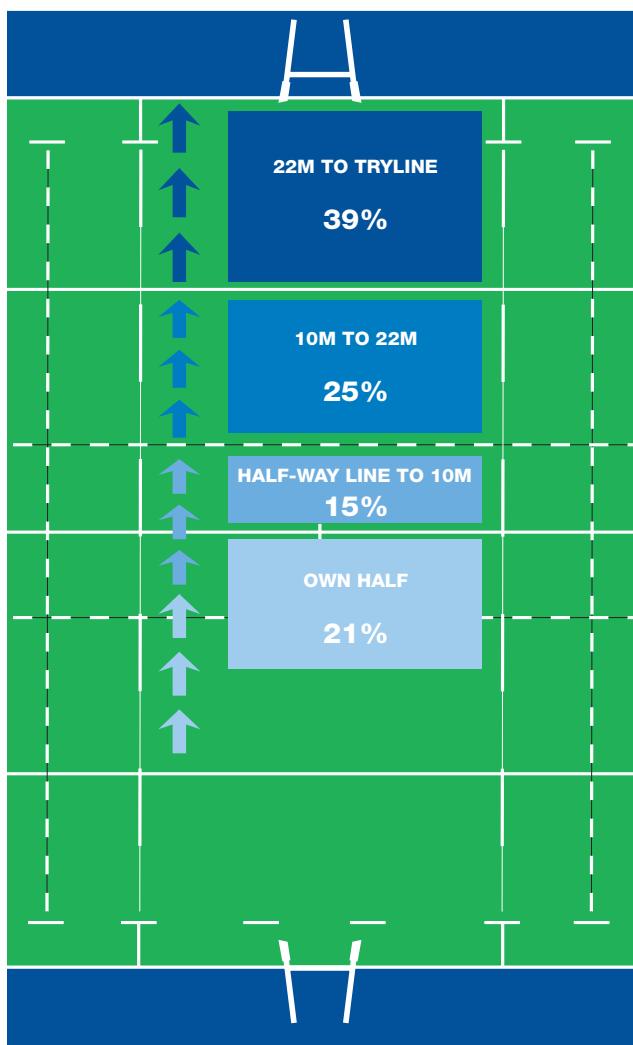
ENGLAND V IRELAND

- Denis Leamy of Ireland and Martin Corry of England battle for a line out during the RBS 6 Nations match between England and Ireland at Twickenham on March 18, 2006.

ORIGIN OF TRIES

Tries originate from various parts of the pitch.

- 24 or **39%** originated within the 22 metre line (2005-30%).
- 15 or **25%** between the 22 and 10 metre line (2005-30%).
- 9 or **15%** between 10 metres and halfway (2005- 12%).
- 13 or **21%** originated in the scoring team's half (2005-28%).



TRY ORIGINS

In 2001, 1 in 3 tries originated from within the scoring team's own half. This has become a less frequent occurrence over recent years . In 2002, it went down to 1 in 5, in 2003 and 2004 it was 1 in 6, in 2005 it was 1 in 3 and in 2006, 1 in 5.

With regard to the 6 competing teams, in 2005 **Wales** scored 8 or almost 50% of their tries from within their own half. This year it was 25%.

The two tries that were scored from furthest out were scored by **Italy**.

POSITION WHERE TRIES WERE SCORED

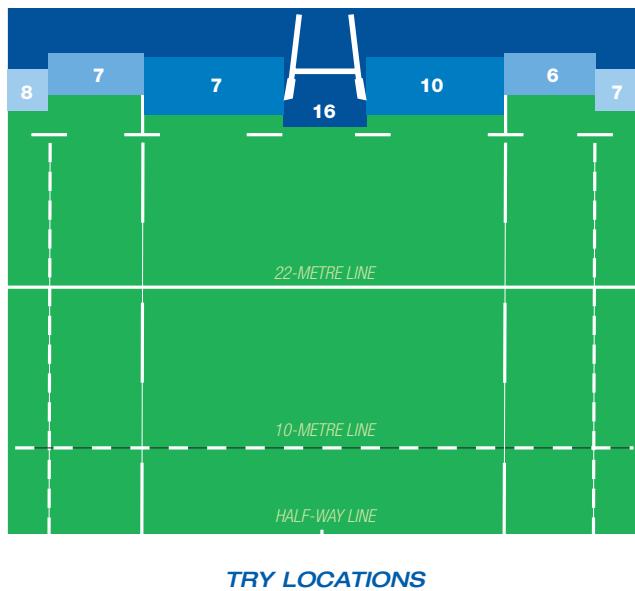
The chart below indicates where across the goal-line tries were scored.

	2006	2005
UNDER THE POSTS	26%	14%
LEFT SIDE OF THE POSTS	36%	46%
RIGHT SIDE OF THE POSTS	38%	40%



IRELAND V SCOTLAND

• Brian O'Driscoll of Ireland is tackled during the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between Ireland and Scotland at Lansdowne Road on March 11, 2006 in Dublin, Ireland.



BUILD-UP TO TRIES

Possession of the ball that leads to tries is obtained from a number of sources. More often than not, other actions - phases (i.e. rucks/mauls), kicks and passes - then take place before the try is scored.

The first table shows the number phases that preceded each of the 61 tries scored in the 2006 Championship

The table shows that 83% of tries were preceded by 3 or fewer phases (2005 - 83%).

NUMBER OF 2ND PHASES		FREQUENCY
NONE	13	
1	13	= 83%
2	9	
3	5	
4	3	
5	3	
6	1	
7	0	
8	1	
9	1	
10+	1	
		71

The next table shows the total number of passes that preceded each of the 61 tries.

The table shows that 69% of tries were preceded by 3 or fewer passes (2005 - 51%).

This was not a figure that was seen consistently throughout all 6 teams.

Three of **Scotland's** 5 tries included no passes. In **Wales'** case, on the other hand, it was 1 in 9.

NUMBER OF PASSES	FREQUENCY	
NONE	18	
1	10	= 69%
2	6	
3	8	
4	7	
5	1	
6	2	
7	1	
8	1	
9	0	
10	0	
11	1	
12	0	
13	2	
14	0	
15	0	
16	2	
20+	2	

TIMING OF TRIES

The following 2 charts show that:

- **Wales** and **Italy** scored most of their tries in the first half; **Scotland, Ireland, France and England** scored most of theirs in the second.
- **Wales** scored 7 of their 9 tries in the first 35 minutes of play.
- With regard to tries conceded, **Ireland** was the only country to concede more tries in the first half than the second.
- **Wales** and **Italy** conceded more tries in the second half than the other 4 teams combined.
- **France** scored 6 tries in the first half, 5 of which came in one game (v Ireland). In the first half of their remaining 4 games, France scored a total of 1 try.

- a. the half in which each country scored their tries.

	1ST HALF	2ND HALF
FRANCE	6	12
IRELAND	3	9
SCOTLAND	2	3
ENGLAND	4	8
WALES	7	2
ITALY	4	1

- b. the half in which each country conceded tries.

	1ST HALF	2ND HALF
FRANCE	2	5
IRELAND	7	3
SCOTLAND	3	4
ENGLAND	3	5
WALES	5	10
ITALY	6	8

TIMING OF SCORES

There is a noticeable difference between the time when tries are scored and the time when penalties are kicked.

In RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006:

- **26** tries were scored in the first half - **35** in the second.
- Penalty goals however showed a different profile.
- **40** penalties were kicked in the first half - **33** in the second.

The following chart breaks down the timings further and shows both penalties and tries in 5 minute sequences:

MINUTES	1ST HALF		2ND HALF		
	TRIES	PENS.	MINUTES	TRIES	PENS.
5 min	3	5	5 min	2	7
10 min	4	4	10 min	5	4
15 min	4	4	15 min	2	3
20 min	2	5	20 min	4	5
25 min	0	3	25 min	3	4
30 min	5	5	30 min	2	1
35 min	5	5	35 min	2	1
40 min	1	6	40 min	2	2
40min+	2	5	40min+	11	5

With the exception of last year, noticeably more tries are now being scored in the second half with more penalty goals in the first half.

The above analysis was then broken down further to see if the scoring profiles of each of the 6 countries reflected the overall scoring profile.

In this, **Wales** and **Italy** stood out. **Wales** scored 7 of their 9 tries in the first half while **Italy** also scored 4 of their 5 tries in the first half. **England, Ireland and France** scored at least twice as many tries in the second half as in the first.

Only one team kicked more penalties in the second half - **England** whose 10 comfortably exceeded the 4 kicked in the first half.

3. mode of play

MATCH TIME

The average length of a match in RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006 was **91 mins 34 seconds**.

The comparative figure for RBS 6 Nations Championship 2005 was **91 mins 24 seconds**.
(an increase of just 10 seconds.)

The longest match time was 100 mins 20 secs.
The shortest match time was 86 mins 15 secs.

14 of the 15 matches had more stoppages in the second half than the first.

BALL IN PLAY TIMES

In percentage terms, the 2006 matches produced the following ball-in-play times;

	BALL IN PLAY TIME %
ENGLAND VS IRELAND	46%
WALES VS FRANCE	45%
ITALY VS SCOTLAND	43%
FRANCE VS ENGLAND	48%
IRELAND VS SCOTLAND	49%
WALES VS ITALY	40%
IRELAND VS WALES	47%
SCOTLAND VS ENGLAND	43%
FRANCE VS ITALY	45%
WALES VS SCOTLAND	47%
ITALY VS ENGLAND	49%
FRANCE VS IRELAND	51%
SCOTLAND VS FRANCE	50%
ENGLAND VS WALES	43%
IRELAND VS ITALY	39%
OVERALL AVERAGE	46%

Together with 2004, this figure was the highest ever recorded in a RBS 6 Nations Championship.

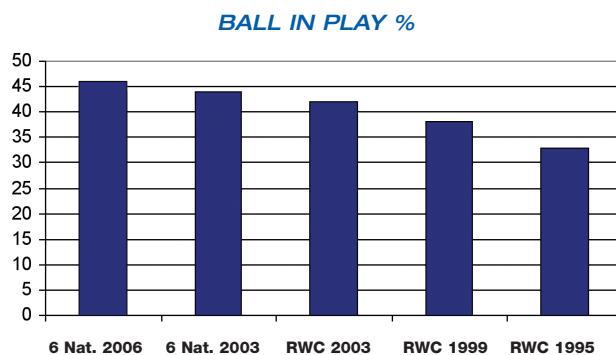
In 2005, the corresponding average was 44%.

An indication of how far ball in play time has increased is when a comparison is made with 5 Nations 1999. In that year, only one game exceeded 40% ball in play time while in 2006, all but one of the 15 achieved 40% or more.

Not surprisingly, the above figures also show noticeable increases from RWC 1991, 1995, 1999 and 2003 as shown below:

ball in play time RWC 1991	24 mins 48 secs (31%)
ball in play time RWC 1995	26 mins 43 secs (33%)
ball in play time RWC 1999	30 mins 35 secs (38%)
ball in play time RWC 2003	33 mins 17 secs (42%)
ball in play time RBS 6 Nat. 2006	36 mins 31 secs (46%)

Since the game went professional at the end of 1995, ball in play time has increased by between 33% to 40%.



In the 15 matches, when it came to possession, one team stood apart from the others. **England** was way ahead. In all but one of its 5 games, it obtained more possession than its opponents and in all but one game to a noticeably greater extent. In 2 of its matches, it obtained around 80% more possession than its opponents. In a third, it obtained 40% more.

The average time in possession of the ball of each team is shown in the following table:

MINUTES OF POSSESSION		
	2005	
ENGLAND	21 min 18 sec	21 min 17 sec
IRELAND	19 min 30 sec	16 min 04 sec
FRANCE	18 min 27 sec	17 min 05 sec
SCOTLAND	17 min 23 sec	18 min 12 sec
WALES	17 min 57 sec	17 min 14 sec
ITALY	14 min 58 sec	16 min 33 sec

The difference between top and bottom is considerable. On average, England obtained over 40% more possession than Italy.

ACTIVITY CYCLES

Activity cycles reflect what happens when the ball is in play - and with increased ball in play times, there has been a consequent increase in activity levels (i.e. there have been more passes, kicks and ruck/mauls). Consequently, the average number of stoppages in the game has come down and in recent years has stabilised at around **95** per game.



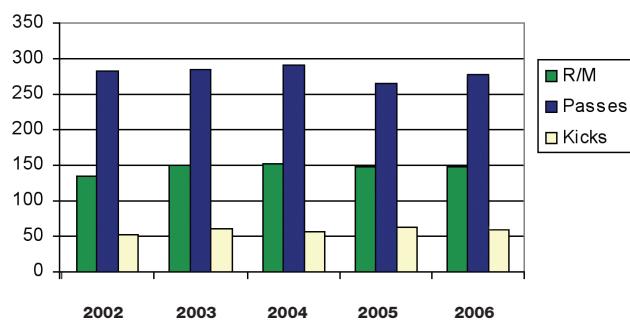
WALES V FRANCE

- Lee Byrne of Wales is tackled by Chrisophe Dominici of France during the RBS 6 Nations match between Wales and France at the Millennium Stadium on March 18, 2006.

The following data compares the average for the matches played in the last 4 years:

	2003	2004	2005	2006
RUCKS/MAULS (2nd phase)	150	152	147	149
PASSES	285	291	266	276
OPEN PLAY KICKS	60	57	62	63
KICK:PASS RATIO	1:4.8	1:5.1	1:4.3	1:4.4

RUCKS/MAULS, PASSES AND KICKS



It can be seen that the increase in ball in play time over recent years has resulted in more rucks, passes and kicks with open play kicks increasing proportionately more than rucks and passes. The level of such actions is however no longer increasing since average ball in play time now appears to have stabilised at around the 45% mark.

4. rucks/mauls

(2nd + phases)

The average number of rucks/mauls per game was **149** (2005 - 147).

The most in any game was 176 - the fewest was 123. The most by any team in a game was 132 (**Ireland** v France) - the fewest was **Scotland** (43) v England.

There was a noticeable difference between some of the 6 teams. **England** for example created almost 100% more rucks/mauls than **Italy** and 45% more than **France**. The average per country is shown below:

AVERAGE NO OF RUCKS/MAULS PER GAME		2005
ENGLAND	100	93
IRELAND	85	60
WALES	77	74
FRANCE	69	66
SCOTLAND	64	82
ITALY	52	66
Overall Average	75	74

The above table shows the total number of rucks/mauls created by each team in the competition expressed as an average per game. On a game by game basis therefore it shows that **England and Ireland** created the most rucks and mauls while **Italy** rucked and mauled the least.

However, the number of rucks and mauls made by one team may be constrained because it obtained only limited possession of the ball. In order to address this, an alternative calculation has been made which relates the number of rucks/mauls to the share of ball in play time won by each team.

RUCK/MAULS PER MINUTES POSSESSION		2005
ENGLAND	4.7	4.3
IRELAND	4.4	3.7
WALES	4.3	4.3
SCOTLAND	3.7	4.5
FRANCE	3.7	3.9
ITALY	3.4	4.0
Overall Average	4.1	4.1

The above shows that **England** not only created the most rucks and mauls, its rate of rucking was the highest. Similarly, while **Italy** made the fewest number of rucks and mauls, its rate of rucking and mauling was also less than the other countries. However, the differences between the various teams was far closer when comparing the rate of rucking with the number of rucks created.

At the breakdown the team taking in the ball retained possession by either winning the ball or being awarded a penalty on 92% of occasions. The percentage success rate for each team was very similar and was as follows:

RETENTION OF POSSESSION AT THE BREAKDOWN	
ENGLAND	91%
IRELAND	94%
SCOTLAND	90%
WALES	93%
FRANCE	93%
ITALY	92%

The number of rucks/mauls (2nd phases) created by a team can however vary enormously from match to match. The following table shows the average number of rucks/mauls per country per game as shown above together with the most in a game and the least in a game:

	AVERAGE PER GAME (2005)		MOST IN A GAME (2005)		LEAST IN A GAME (2005)	
	ENGLAND	IRELAND	WALES	FRANCE	SCOTLAND	ITALY
AVERAGE	100	85	77	69	64	52
PER GAME (2005)	93	60	74	66	82	66
MOST IN A GAME (2005)	124	132	91	94	79	60
IN A GAME (2005)	110	81	92	81	137	76
LEAST IN A GAME (2005)	76	62	56	44	43	38
ENGLAND	100	85	77	69	64	52
IRELAND	93	60	74	66	82	66
WALES	124	132	91	94	79	60
FRANCE	110	81	92	81	137	76
SCOTLAND	76	62	56	44	43	38
ITALY	72	37	63	43	57	55

5. passes

Games, on average, contained 276 passes (2005 - 264). The most in any game was 350 (**France v Ireland**) - the fewest was 228 (**Scotland v England, Ireland v Italy**).

The most by any team in a game was 247 (**Ireland**) - (a record) - the fewest, 55 (**Scotland**).

Again, there were noticeable differences between the 6 teams - **Ireland and Wales** made over 50% more passes than **Italy**. Each team's average is shown below:

AVERAGE NO OF PASSES PER GAME		2005
IRELAND	161	106
WALES	157	147
ENGLAND	148	156
FRANCE	140	129
SCOTLAND	117	147
ITALY	103	107
Overall Average	138	133

When an adjustment is made to take account of the percentage possession obtained by each team, then the table changes however.

This table now shows that **Wales** were the clearly the highest passing team, their rate exceeding **Scotland**, for example, by over 30%

PASSES PER MINUTES POSSESSION		2005
WALES	8.8	8.6
IRELAND	8.2	6.6
FRANCE	7.6	7.6
ENGLAND	7.0	7.3
ITALY	6.9	6.5
SCOTLAND	6.7	8.1

The number of passes made by a team can also vary significantly from match to match. The following table shows the average number of passes per country per game as shown above together with the most in a game and the least in a game.

PASSES	AVERAGE PER GAME	MOST IN A GAME	LEAST IN A GAME
ENGLAND	148	173	125
SCOTLAND	117	158	55
WALES	157	178	130
FRANCE	140	202	97
ITALY	103	124	72
IRELAND	161	247	120

Last year's RBS 6 Nations Championship was a championship of contrasts - with none more noticeable than in the area of passes. While one game had as few as 175 passes, the **Scotland v Wales** game had 428. This was a record - and this year, another passing record was broken from what appeared to be an unlikely source.

Last year **Ireland** made fewer passes than any other team - just 106 per game. This year, things changed - so much so, that they were the highest passing team in this year's RBS 6 Nations Championship with their game in France producing a record performance. In the second half of that game, Ireland made more passes - 153 - than any team has done before at senior international level.

While the above data may be a surprise to some, an equally significant surprise came when, just as last year, passes were broken down into 3 groups - viz

- passes made by backs (excluding the scrum half)
- passes made by the scrum half
- passes made by forwards.

When the 4000 or so passes made in RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006 were allocated into these 3 groups, the results were as follows:

PERCENTAGE OF ALL PASSES	2006	2005
MADE BY BACKS	40%	42%
MADE BY SCRUM HALF	44%	43%
MADE BY FORWARDS	16%	15%

As far as the backs were concerned, all countries had a similar profile - i.e. backs accounted for around 40% of all passes. The percentages for each country are shown below:

PERCENTAGE OF ALL PASSES MADE BY BACKS		2005
FRANCE	42%	42%
ITALY	42%	42%
IRELAND	41%	41%
ENGLAND	39%	44%
WALES	39%	39%
SCOTLAND	37%	41%

More noticeable differences started to arise however when the percentage of passes made by the scrum half was examined.

The overall average was 44% but there were wider divergences than in the case of backs, as shown below:

PERCENTAGE OF ALL PASSES MADE BY SCRUM HALF		2005
ENGLAND	48%	44%
IRELAND	47%	50%
ITALY	46%	46%
FRANCE	42%	43%
SCOTLAND	42%	40%
WALES	38%	39%

Differences are even more pronounced in the case of passes by forwards where, just as last year, **Wales** is especially noticeable:

PERCENTAGE OF ALL PASSES MADE BY FORWARDS		2005
WALES	23%	22%
SCOTLAND	21%	19%
FRANCE	16%	15%
ENGLAND	14%	12%
ITALY	12%	12%
IRELAND	12%	9%

What is particularly interesting about this table of passes by forwards is that the order is identical to last year with Wales at the top and Ireland at the bottom. The strategic approaches of the 6 teams have not changed therefore in relation to the proportion of passes made by backs, forwards and scrum half. What has changed however is that - compared to 2005 - all teams have increased the proportion of passes made by forwards. In other words, all teams forwards are making relatively more passes.

There are still however, noticeable contrasts between certain teams as can be seen when the previous 3 tables are combined.

	PERCENTAGE OF PASSES:	BY SCRUM	
	BY BACKS	HALF	BY FORWARDS
WALES	39%	38%	23%
SCOTLAND	37%	42%	21%
FRANCE	42%	42%	16%
ENGLAND	39%	48%	14%
ITALY	42%	46%	12%
IRELAND	41%	47%	12%

There are therefore distinctly different strategic approaches. Where certain teams use forwards more as suppliers of the ball for onward transmission by the backs, other teams involve the forwards themselves in the distribution process. **Wales** continue to be the most noticeable proponents of the latter process with **Ireland and Italy** favouring the former. Examples - and there are some hugely contrasting examples - will be shown later. Meanwhile, as a factual illustration of the different approach adopted by **Wales** - and now **Scotland** - from the other teams - the following tables show what each rank of forwards did with the ball when they were in possession of it.

The first table shows the number of times each countries' forwards had the ball in their hands and then notes the number of times they passed it. This is then expressed as a ratio so that

PASSES : POSSESSIONS BY FORWARDS	
WALES	1 : 2.2
SCOTLAND	1 : 2.4
FRANCE	1 : 2.8
ITALY	1 : 3.1
IRELAND	1 : 3.6
ENGLAND	1 : 3.7

if a team's forwards passed the ball 20 times having received it 100 times, the ratio would be expressed as 1 to 5 - ie 1 pass for every 5 possessions.

What the table shows is that **England's** forwards, for example, were only half as likely to pass the ball as **Wales'** forwards.

This difference between the forwards of each country is even more graphically illustrated when the forwards are broken down into the 3 groups of (a) front row, (b) second row and (c) back row. This time the relationship between passes and possession is expressed in percentage terms, so that if a group of forwards received the ball 20 times and passed it 6 times, it means they passed it on 30% of occasions.

The difference between **Wales** and **England** is highlighted again - Wales' front row were two and a half times more likely to pass the ball than England's front row.

It was not the same as far as the second rows were concerned. For this category, Wales' players were very nearly the least likely to pass the ball albeit they were very close to **England** and **Ireland**. On this occasion, **Scotland's** and **France's** second row forwards were twice as likely to pass as their counterparts in the other 4 teams

BALL PASSED BY FRONT ROW	
WALES	47%
SCOTLAND	32%
ITALY	23%
IRELAND	23%
FRANCE	21%
ENGLAND	19%

BALL PASSED BY SECOND ROW	
SCOTLAND	55%
FRANCE	48%
ITALY	30%
ENGLAND	25%
WALES	24%
IRELAND	23%

BALL PASSED BY BACK ROW	
WALES	52%
SCOTLAND	40%
FRANCE	40%
ITALY	38%
IRELAND	32%
ENGLAND	32%

The final category is the back row where **Wales** is once again the highest passing group with **England and Ireland** being the least likely to pass.

The tables are the result of a summation of all the data collected in all 15 matches of the championship and reflect several strategic playing differences. Hidden away in some of the matches, however, are some fascinating pieces of data relating to passes. They include the following:

- The entire Scotland team made just **15** passes in the first half against England. In that particular game, only 5 Scottish players made more than **1** pass.
- In their game against Ireland, the Scottish back 5 forwards made almost **twice** as many passes as the 5 outside backs.
- The Irish scrum half made **101** passes in the game against France. This was substantially more than the entire Irish team made in 3 of their 2005 RBS 6 Nations Championship matches.
- Half the Irish pack did not make a single pass in the entire game against Wales - and half the Scottish pack did not make a pass against England.
- In the second half against Italy, the Irish numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 made **not** a single pass between them.
- In the first half against England, 5 of Wales' 8 forwards did not make a single pass.

PASSING MOVEMENTS

Passes are grouped into passing movements - (i.e. one pass movement, two pass movements and so on).

The data shows that some **80%** of all passing movements contained two passes or less. This now appears to be a constant and varies little from year to year.

Most teams played to this formula - with all 6 teams hovering around the 80% mark in 2006.

6. kicks

The average number of kicks per game was **63** (2005 - 62). The most open play kicks in a game was **90** - the fewest **42**. The most by any team in a game was 45 (**Ireland, Scotland and France** twice) - the fewest 18 (**Ireland**).

There were more differences between the 6 participating teams this year than last year. While in 2005, all were within 6 kicks of each other, this year the spread was 12 with **France** for example making almost 50% more kicks than **England**.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF KICKS PER GAME		2005
FRANCE	38	28
ITALY	34	34
SCOTLAND	33	31
WALES	30	30
IRELAND	28	34
ENGLAND	26	28

When an adjustment is made to take account of the percentage possession obtained by each team, it shows that **Italy** were the highest kicking team in relation to the possession they obtained while **England** were the lowest.

KICKS PER MINUTES POSSESSION		2005
ITALY	2.3	2.0
FRANCE	2.1	1.6
SCOTLAND	1.9	1.7
WALES	1.6	1.8
IRELAND	1.4	2.1
ENGLAND	1.2	1.3
Overall Average	1.7	1.7

England made fewer kicks than their opponents in 4 of their 5 matches while **Italy** made more kicks than their opponents in 4 of their 5.

SUMMARY

A summary of previous tables - the first showing the average number of rucks, passes, and kicks per game and the second the rate per minute possession - is given below:



IRELAND - KICKS

- Ronan O'Gara of Ireland drop kicks the ball upfield.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF RUCKS, PASSES, KICKS PER GAME

ENGLAND	100	148	26
SCOTLAND	64	117	33
WALES	77	157	30
ITALY	52	103	34
FRANCE	69	140	38
IRELAND	85	161	28

AVERAGE NUMBER OF RUCKS, PASSES, KICKS PER MINUTE POSSESSION

ENGLAND	4.7	7.0	1.2
SCOTLAND	3.7	6.7	1.9
WALES	4.3	8.8	1.6
ITALY	3.4	6.9	2.3
FRANCE	3.7	7.6	2.1
IRELAND	4.4	8.2	1.4

7. lineout

The following data compares lineouts in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006:

	2006	2005	2004	2003
AV. NUMBER PER GAME	37	34	36	36
% COMPETED	64%	72%	61%	64%
LINEOUT PENALTIES F/K	1.5	1.1	1.5	1.4
POSSESSION RETAINED	84%	86 %	80%	83%

The most lineouts in a game was 49; the fewest 28.

Most teams had high success rates on their own throw. **Ireland** was the most successful with 91% - **Scotland** the least successful with 77%. **Ireland** were particularly effective in preventing their opponents from stealing the ball. This happened in only one lineout in 13: **Scotland's** opponents on the other hand managed to steal the Scottish ball in 1 in 4 lineouts.

On opponents' throw ins, success rate varied considerably with **Ireland**, **England** and **France** having noticeably greater success in stealing opposition ball than **Wales** and **Scotland**. Each team's success rate is shown in the grid on the right.

England put the ball into touch noticeably fewer times than any other team.



WALES V FRANCE

- Robert Sidoli of Wales jumps for a lineout ball during the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between Wales and France at the Millennium Stadium on March 18, 2006.



ENGLAND V IRELAND

- Paul O'Connell of Ireland stretches to make a catch during the RBS 6 Nations Championship match between England and Ireland at Twickenham on March 18, 2006.

SUCCESS ON OPPONENTS THROW IN (STEALS)	
IRELAND	1 in 5
ENGLAND	1 in 6
FRANCE	1 in 6
ITALY	1 in 9
WALES	1 in 16
SCOTLAND	1 in 16

Competition at the lineout decreased slightly this year. Possession retained by the throwing in team has however changed little. However, it should be noted that quality of possession has not been measured. No distinction has been made therefore between good and bad possession. This same qualification applies to scrum data.

8. scrum

The following data compares scrummages in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006:

	2006	2005	2004	2003
AV. NUMBER PER GAME	19	20	21	20
SCRUM PENS PER GAME	2.7	3.4	3.1	3.1
SCRUM PENS AS A % OF ALL PENS				
PEN : SCRUM RATIO	1 : 7	1 : 6	1 : 6	1 : 7
POSSESSION RETAINED	95%	94%	87%	88%

In RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006, there were 290 scrummages and 123 resets making a total of 413 scrum engagements. One in 6 scrums collapsed.

There was a noticeable difference in the incidence of collapsed scrums - ie on certain team's put ins, collapses were considerably more likely to occur.

What the following table shows is how many scrum engagements on each team's put in collapsed with no penalty*. It can be seen that in England's case 1 in 3 collapsed while in Wales' case the comparable figure was 1 in 14.

RATE OF COLLAPSED SCRUMS INC RESETS		PER ENGAGEMENTS
ENGLAND	1	3
IRELAND	1	5
ITALY	1	5
SCOTLAND	1	7
FRANCE	1	11
WALES	1	14

There were no free kicks for crooked feed in 2006 and there were no free kicks awarded in 2005.

* there were 11 penalties awarded for collapsed scrums out of a total of 413 scrum engagements. One in 6 scrums collapses ended in a penalty.

9. restarts

Of 50m restarts, 55% were kicked long - 45% were kicked short and were contestable. (2005 - 53% and 47%). **Italy** however kicked long on almost 90% of occasions - and while **Italy** kicked short only three times (and retained possession on 2 of them), no other country kicked short less than 11 times.

When 50m restarts were kicked short, the kicking team regained possession on 1 in 5 occasions.

At 22m restarts, 67% were kicked long 33% short. The success rate on the short kicks was 1 in 2.

Success rate varied between the 6 teams. Of the

RETENTION OF SHORT RESTARTS	
WALES	1 in 2
ENGLAND	1 in 4
FRANCE	1 in 5
SCOTLAND	1 in 7
IRELAND	1 in 9

5 teams that kicked short on at least 13 occasions, **Wales** were clearly the most effective in retaining possession as shown in this table.

10. penalties

NUMBER AND INCIDENCE

In RBS 6 Nations Championship 2006, the average number of penalties and free kicks awarded in a game was 21. This compares with 20 in 2005.

In 2006, the most awarded in a single game was 28 - the least, 16. The comparative figures for 2005 were 26 and 12.

TEAMS PENALISED

England conceded the most penalties (incl free kicks) while Ireland conceded the fewest as shown in the following table:

PENALTIES CONCEDED	2006	2005
ENGLAND	61	51
WALES	59	49
SCOTLAND	54	51
ITALY	53	54
FRANCE	48	53
IRELAND	47	43

The above table shows that even between the most penalised team and least penalised team the difference was relatively small. On average, England, who gave away the most penalties, conceded only 3 penalties a game more than Ireland, the least penalised team who were also the least penalised team last year and the year before.

What needs to be noted is that the above are absolute figures - but because the number of penalties can vary from match to match (in 2006, between 16 and 28), a better and probably more accurate indicator, is the proportion of penalties conceded by a team in all their matches compared with their opponents.

PROPORTION OF TIMES PENALISED	2006	2005
WALES	55%	48%
ITALY	53%	57%
FRANCE	51%	49%
SCOTLAND	51%	53%
ENGLAND	50%	50%
IRELAND	41%	44%

What the above table shows is that while England conceded more penalties than any other team, they conceded no more than their opponents. Their matches simply contained more penalties.

Ireland again concede proportionately fewer penalties than any other team.

CATEGORIES OF OFFENCES PENALISED

The following table groups the penalties awarded into 10 categories - and shows the comparative figure for RBS 6 Nations Championship 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006:

	2003	2004	2005	2006
RUCK/TACKLE -				
ON GROUND OFFENCES	49	47	43	46
OFFSIDE - BACKS/				
FORWARDS/OPEN PLAY	19	19	15	17
SCRUM	12	14	16	12
LINEOUT	5	7	8	7
PLUS 10 METRES	2	1	>1	1
FOUL PLAY	2	1	2	1
OBSTRUCTION	3	5	2	6
TACKLE - EARLY/LATE/				
DANGEROUS	4	3	6	4
MAUL - PULLING DOWN	2	3	5	3
MISCELLANEOUS	2	3	3	-
	100%	100%	100%	100%

11. tmo

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE REFEREES

Of the 15 matches, 8 were refereed by Northern Hemisphere referees, and 7 by Southern Hemisphere referees. The following table looks at the breakdown of penalties and other match details between the two groups:

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE REFEREES	2006	2005
AVERAGE POINTS PER MATCH	38	52
AVERAGE BALL IN PLAY TIMES	44%	42%
AVERAGE NUMBER OF PENALTIES	21	20

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE REFEREES	2006	2005
AVERAGE POINTS PER MATCH	46	40
AVERAGE BALL IN PLAY TIMES	48%	46%
AVERAGE NUMBER OF PENALTIES	22	20

- During the championship, there were 11 references to the TMO (2005- 8).
- The TMO was used in **6** of the **15** matches. In one match (Ireland v Wales), he was referred to 4 times.
- As a result of the 11 references, **5 tries** were awarded.
- The shortest reference to the TMO took 35 seconds - the longest, 3 minutes 12 seconds.
- 8 of the references took more than one minute (1min 07secs, 1min 29secs, 1min 34secs, 1min 38secs, 2min 2secs, 2min 19secs, 2min 29secs, 3min 12secs).
- The remaining 4 references took 35, 41 and 43 seconds.

12. cards issued

The following paragraphs examine the circumstances and effects of the issue of red and yellow cards during the RBS 6 Nations Championship, 2006.

RED CARDS

There was one issued for foul play (kicking) during the 2006 Championship - Wales v Scotland. Ref. S. Walsh (NZ). (2005 - no red cards issued)

YELLOW CARDS

8 cards were awarded against a forward: 1 against a back. In 7 of the 15 matches, not a single yellow card was issued.

MATCH	REFEREE	YC
ENGLAND V WALES	P HONISS (NZ)	1
IRELAND V ITALY	D PEARSON (E)	1
WALES V SCOTLAND	S WALSH (NZ)	1
IRELAND V WALES	J KAPLAN (SA)	1
SCOTLAND V ENGLAND	A LEWIS (IRE)	1
FRANCE V ITALY	T SPREADBURY (E)	1
WALES V FRANCE	C WHITE (E)	1
ENGLAND V IRELAND	N WHITEHOUSE (W)	2
NUMBER ISSUED		9
(2005 - 5 YELLOW CARDS ISSUED)		

OFFENCES FOR WHICH YELLOW CARD ISSUED

OFFENCE	YC	OFFENCE	YC
FOUL PLAY	1	OBSTRUCTION	3
RUCK/TACKLE - NOT		ILLEGAL TACKLE	2
RELEASING PLAYER	1	NOT RETREATING	1
OFFSIDE	1	TOTAL YC ISSUED	9

COUNTRIES CONCEDING YELLOW CARDS

	2003	2004	2005	2006
FRANCE	0	0	0	1
ITALY	1	1	1	2
WALES	2	0	2	2
ENGLAND	2	0	1	2
SCOTLAND	3	2	1	0
IRELAND	0	1	0	2
	8	4	5	9

CARDS

Awarded by Northern Hemisphere referees	6
Awarded by Southern Hemisphere referees	3
Issued against home team player	3
Issued against away team player	6
Issued during first half	5
Issued during second half	4
Issued against player of team in lead	4
Issued against player of team behind	3
Scores equal	2

IMPACT ON SCORING DURING SIN BIN PERIOD

- In one game a player from each side was dismissed thereby negating any benefit.
- In one game each team had a player sent off and each scored the same number of points.
- In one game the team with 14 players scored more points than the team with 15.
- In one game no points were scored during the sin bin period.
- In one game a team scored 7 points but lost the game.
- In 2 games the team with 15 players scored 7 points and eventually won with margins of 25 points or over.
- In one game the team with 15 players scored a net 4 points and eventually won the game by 10 points.

Overall therefore, points scored in the sin bin period are likely to have had a relatively small impact - if any - on the final result.

13. sub

SUBSTITUTIONS

In the 15 matches, there were:

5 blood bins
and
153 tactical and injury substitutions.

There were, on average, 10 replacements per game - the same as last year. The range of replacements varied between 4 a game and 14 a game.

Countries also used substitutes to varying degrees. Ireland, for example, averaged less than 3 per game while Scotland averaged over 6. The other 4 countries averages were between these 2 figures.

