



ITALY

v IRELAND

Saturday 2 February 2008

Croke Park, Dublin

Referee: Jonathan Kaplan* (South Africa)

*** Chris White (England) withdrew with calf injury on 30 January**

Touch judges: Wayne Barnes (England), Peter Allan (Scotland)

TMO: Tim Hayes (Wales)

Assessor: Tappe Henning (South Africa)

Last match, RWC2007 group game

29.09.07

v Scotland St Etienne Lost 16-18

15-Bortolussi 14-Robertson 13-Canale 12-Mi Bergamasco 11-Masi 10-Pez 9-Troncon © 8-Parisse 7-Ma Bergamasco 6-Sole 5-Del Fava 4-Dellape 3-Castrogiovanni 2-Festuccia 1-Perugini

Subs used: Lo Cicero, Ongaro, Galon

T: Troncon C: Bortolussi PG: Bortolussi 3

TEAM v Ireland

New coach Nick Mallett has opted for experience in his first selection, but has caused a surprise at half back by playing centre/wing Andrea Masi at fly-half and recalling scrum half Pietro Travagli. Mallett acknowledged that No 10 was a problem position but preferred Masi to Ramiro Pez and the inexperienced Andrea Marcato while Roland de Marigny is currently injured.

Travagli takes over at scrum half from the 101 times capped Alessandro Troncon, whilst prop Martin Castrogiovanni wins his 50th cap

Sergio Parisse takes over as captain, and former captain Marco Bortolami is scheduled to return in a month. Winger Mario Praticchetti has a shoulder injury.

Italy hope to better last season's record of two Six Nations wins

15 David Bortolussi (RC Montpellier-Herault)

- **21.06.81 1.88m 91kgs**
- **15th cap - 1T 34C 18PG 1DG = 133pts**
- **Debut: 2006 v Japan**
- **2nd test v Ireland – 1C 1PG 1DG = 8pts in 2007**
- All 4 games at RWC 2007 and 4C 8PG = 32pts, but just missed at the end v Scotland
- 8C in both RWC qualifiers v Russia (67-7) and Portugal (83-0)
- Has been based in France and was born at Auch.
- Has been first choice full back for well over a year but missed the 2007 Six Nations through injury
- Plays in the French Top 14, and in his 5th season with Montpellier
- Began his career with home town Auch in 2000, and switched in 2001 to Begles Bordeaux for 2 seasons, and with his current club since summer 2003



14 **Kaine Robertson (Viadana)**

- **29.10.80** **1.78m** **86kgs**
- **27th cap - 12T = 60pts**
- **Debut: 2004 v Romania**
- 4th test v Ireland – no pts
- 3 games at RWC 2007
- Had a good 2007 Six Nations - missed France, returned for the injured Andrea Masi v England, and scored tries v Scotland and Wales
- Back from autumn 2006 for the RWC qualifiers and autumn series after missing the first part of the 2006 year (inc Six Nations) with knee ligament damage. Scored 3T v Portugal and 2T v Russia in RWC qualifiers
- Auckland born, was a school team mate of Doug Hewlett as a youth, and came to Italy aged 18 to play for Via Dana,
- Played in 11 of 12 tests in a row before the knee injury struck, and 15 of 18 tests since, he initially progressed through the Sevens squad.

13 **Gonzalo Javier Canale (Clermont-Auvergne, France)**

- **11.11.82** **1.80m** **91kgs**
- **37th cap - 5T = 25pts**
- **Debut: 2003 v Scotland**
- 5th test v Ireland – no pts
- Played last 3 group games at RWC2007
- Missed first two 2004 Six Nations tests, then returned and kept his place since except for injury, which blighted his 2005 campaign. Started all Six Nations tests in 2006, but missed summer tour and RWC qualifiers with a thigh injury, but back for autumn series and 2007 Six Nations
- Moved in summer 2005 from Treviso to Clermont, where his team-mates included Stephen Jones.
- He is also from the successful national U21 side, played in World U21Cup in England in summer 2003.
- Student when with the Treviso club, he has come through the national U19 and U21 system and played in the junior Six Nations.
- First senior call up for the 2002 NZ tour, and capped v Scotland RWC2003 warm-up game.

12 **Mirco Bergamasco (Stade Francais, France)**

- **23.02.83** **1.80m** **92kgs**
- **48th cap - 15T = 75pts**
- **Debut: 2002 v France**
- 7th test v Ireland – 1T = 5pts (in 2006)
- Played 3 of the 4 RWC2007 group games with try v NZ in opener
- French Championship medal 2004 and again in 2007
- His 6T in the Six Nations is a new ongoing Italian record in the competition, and his 3T in 2006 was equal top scorer in the tournament.
- Scored 8 international tries in 2006
- 9 starts on wing, 5 starts at No 15, this is 23rd start in centre, and 7 tests as sub
- Capped against France in 2002 aged 18 after turning up for the 2002 trial ostensibly to watch his brother in the World All-Stars game in 2002 and went forward from there.
- Both brothers Mirco and Mauro were capped as teenagers, father also played for Italy with 4 caps from 1973-78. The brothers moved to Paris in summer 2003.



11 **Paolo Canavosio (Castres Olympique, France)**

- **26.12.81** **1.75m** **85kgs**
- **18th cap - 4T = 20pts**
- **Debut: 2005 v Australia**
- 3rd test v Ireland – no pts
- Played once at RWC2007, on wing v Portugal
- Moved from Calvisano to Top 14 club Castres in summer 2007
- Capped on 2005 summer tour and autumn tests in 3 different positions after being released from Sevens squad.
- Born in Cordoba, Argentina, and played for Calvisano, who were the 2005 Italian champions.
- Has been in the national Sevens squad, and by trade is a scrum-half, a role he shared at Calvisano with Paul Griffen
- Vacancy occurred on right wing caused by cruciate knee ligaments injury to Kaine Robertson for Viadana v Catania in October 2005. Started 8 tests on wing. Now covering several positions

10 **Andrea Masi (Biarritz Olympique, France)**

- **30.03.81** **1.83m** **97kgs**
- **36th cap - 10T = 50pts**
- **Debut: 1999 v Spain**
- 4th test v Ireland – no pts
- Played twice in centre, twice on left wing at RWC2007 – scored 2T v Portugal
- RWC2003 – all 4 games in an improved display which continued through 2004 and 2005 Six Nations. Missed the 2006 Six Nations through injury but now back to form in first season with the French champions
- Surprise late call for Twickenham 2003 after gaining his only previous cap in a RWC99 warm up game v Spain where he scored a try and played at full back. Nearly made the RWC99 squad but was only 18y old at the time.
- 2nd cap at Twickenham 2003 (sub for Dallan) after waiting 3yrs 7months for 2nd cap.
- Born at L'Aquila began with his local club side until moving to Viadana and then a recent switch in summer 2006 to Biarritz. Made his championship debut for the club aged 16y 8m in 1997-98.

9 **Pietro Travagli (Overmach Parma)**

- **28.04.81** **1.81m** **92kgs**
- **3rd cap – 1T = 5pts**
- **Debut: 2004 v Canada**
- 1st test v Ireland
- Is a scrumhalf, but made debut as sub on the wing v Canada and scored try.
- Capped v Canada and NZ as sub in November 2004 incoming tours – has missed 37 tests since then
- Was a youth player with hometown Treviso, then switched to play for Viadana, with whom he won the 2002 championship. Now with Overmach
- Has played for Italy at six levels, and was an outstanding member of his recent U21 and A sides.



8 **Sergio Parisse (Stade Francais, France)(captain)**

- **12.09.83** **1.96m** **110kgs**
- **49th cap - 2T = 10pts**
- **Debut: 2002 v NZ**
- 6th test v Ireland – no pts
- All 4 games at RWC2007, now first Italy captaincy
- French Championship winners medal 2007 v Clermont Auvergne in final
- 27 tests out of the last 28 after 2007 Six Nations before missing 2007 summer tour as club won French title, after missing 7 tests injured before start of 2005 Six Nations – and that injury was after a run of 10 consecutive appearances.
- Left Treviso in summer 2005 to join the Bergamasco brothers at Stade Francais.
- Born at La Plata (Argentina), his father was a winger in Italian championship wins with L'Aquila in 1960's/1970's and went to play in Argentina
- Selected for World U21 championship in England in summer 2003.
- Prefers No 8 but can play flanker and lock.

7 **Mauro Bergamasco (Stade Francais, France)**

- **01.05.79** **1.83m** **98kgs**
- **63rd cap - 13T = 65pts**
- **Debut: 1998 v Holland**
- 8th test v Ireland – 2T = 10pts (1T in 2001, 2002)
- All 4 RWC2007 games, try v Portugal
- French Championship winners medal 2007 v Clermont Auvergne in final
- Missed the 2004 Six Nations, because of a back injury suffered at RWC2003 and returned v Japan in summer 2004. Regained form from 2005 and played in 10 of the 12 Italian tests in 2006
- Italian Player of the Year 2002. Moved with brother Mirco to Paris in summer 2003, and helped in the French championship win of 2004.
- 3 caps on wing. Sub on wing in record win v Scotland 2007. Has also played in national trials in centre, and for Italy U19 at fly half!
- Test debut at Huddersfield in RWC99 qualifiers aged 20y 7m. Is a student of motor science.
- Father won 4 caps from 1973-78 and brother Mirco is also in the team.

6 **Josh Sole (Viadana)**

- **15.12.80** **1.96m** **110kgs**
- **24th cap - 4T = 20pts**
- **Debut: 2005 v Argentina**
- 4th test v Ireland – no pts
- Two games at RWC2007 v Romania and Scotland
- Swapped with Parisse several times between No 6 and No 8.
- Injured at Twickenham 2007, missed wins v Scotland and Wales
- Integral part of the side since gaining first cap, and played in 11 of the 12 tests in 2006
- Born at Hamilton, NZ, to a family with an Italian background, and a Scottish father.
- Came to Viadana in 2004 after playing in NZ for several seasons for Taranaki at lock and No 8
- Test debut in Argentina in summer 2005, after being called up by Pierre Berbizier, he scored 2T v Tonga in the opening 2005 autumn test and added further tries on the 2006 summer tour v Japan and Fiji.



5 **Carlo Antonio del Fava (Ulster Rugby, Ireland)**

- **01.07.81** **1.98m** **110kgs**
- **24th cap - no pts**
- **Debut: 2004 v Wales**
- 3rd test v Ireland – no pts
- Played final 2 group games at RWC2007 – started both games
- Started all 3 autumn internationals in 2005, after missing 2005 summer tour to Argentina and Australia, remained in squad for Six Nations 2006
- First season with Ulster after joining from French Top 14 club Bourgoin, formerly with Overmach Parma. Is the captain at Ulster.
- Born in Umtata, the capital of the former South African homeland of Transkei, his father is an Italian from Lucca and his mother is South African.
- Moved to Durban, played for Natal at U21 level and was in the Super 12 squad, and also played for Eastern Province.
- 2 full seasons in Italy, he has played for Italian Universities and A XV as John Kirwan looked at him, and then promoted.

4 **Santiago Dellape (Biarritz Olympique, France)**

- **09.05.78** **2.00m** **118kgs**
- **48th cap - 3T = 15pts**
- **Debut: 2002 v France**
- 6th test v Ireland – no pts
- 3 games at RWC2007 – try v Romania
- Played 14 consecutive tests to end of 2007 Six Nations after calf injury in 2006 Six Nations was sorted out. He had a previous spell of just 5 caps in 11 tests after those injury niggles. Then rested for summer 2007 after hard club season
- Moved to Agen from champions Treviso in summer 2004. After two seasons with Agen he is in his 2nd season with the French champions Biarritz
- Another of the Argentine connection – he comes from La Plata.
- Came to Italy originally to play for L'Aquila in 2001 and switched to Viadana and Treviso, and now Italian qualified.

3 **Martin Leandro Castrogiovanni (Leicester Tigers, England)**

- **21.10.81** **1.88m** **117kgs**
- **50th cap - 7T = 35pts**
- **Debut: 2002 v NZ**
- 7th test v Ireland – 1T = 5pts (in 2005)
- Started all 4 games at RWC2007
- Joined Leicester Tigers for 2006-07 from Calvisano, the 2005 champions, and has shown fine form.
- Won the Premiership Player of the Year award in 2006-07 and has extended contract for a further 3 years
- Early career brought a run of 21 caps in 23 tests, then a run of 22 caps in 26 tests since start of 2005 Six Nations to end of 2007 event
- Born in Argentina at Parana.
- 1st cap on summer tour to NZ in 2002. Cemented place from the 2003 Six Nations.
- From Italian national U21 set up.

2 **Leonardo Ghiraldini (Calvisano)**

- **26.12.84** **1.84m** **99kgs**
- **7th cap – no pts**
- **Debut: 2006 v Japan**
- 2nd test v Ireland – no pts
- One game at RWC2007 v Portugal his first test start, has replaced Fabio Ongaro (Saracens) in the squad
- Hooker, who gained his first two caps as sub for Carlo Festuccia on the 2006 summer tour to Japan (52-6) and Fiji (18-29)
- Joined Calvisano in summer 2005 from Padova, and took the hookers jersey from the international Giorgio Intoppa
- Has come through the Italian system via U21 and A levels, and mobile enough to have featured in the Hong Kong Sevens

1 **Andrea lo Cicero (Racing Metro Paris, France)**

- **07.05.76** **1.85m** **113kgs**
- **72nd cap - 8T = 40pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v England**
- 5th test v Ireland – no pts
- All 4 games at RWC2007 – two starts
- Italy's 4th most capped player, and tour captain to Uruguay and Argentina in summer 2007. Next on the lists is Diego Dominguez on 74 caps
- Played 28 of Italy's 29 games before missing the last 2005 autumn international v Fiji and opening 2006 Six Nations test with a knee injury, and then won 50th cap from bench v England. Until Fiji he had started every test from the start of RWC2003.
- But has played in 22 of Italy's last 25 tests for a record of 50 caps out of the last 56 games
- Toured with the Barbarians in 2004 and 2005
- Now plays for Racing since RWC2007 after joining from L'Aquila after being on loan at Lazio of Rome, a Div 2 club, when a contractual dispute with Stade Toulousain, the French champions, blew up.
- From Sicily, he originally played for Bologna, Rovigo and then with RDS Roma from 1999-2001 before moving to France.

Substitutes

16 **Carlo Festuccia (Racing Metro Paris, France)**

- **20.06.80** **1.82m** **105kgs**
- **43rd cap (if he plays) - 2T = 10pts**
- **Debut: 2003 v Wales**
- 5th test v Ireland – no pts
- 3 games at RWC2007 – 2 starts – and then joined Racing with Lo Cicero after RWC as they hope to make the Top 14
- First test try after 20 mins of debut in win v Wales 2003.
- His caps were consecutive before Wales in 2004 Six Nations. Then missed 10 tests in a row. Recalled v France 2005 as he regained form under Berbizier.
- Has played in 16 the last 18 internationals in his latest sequence of caps
- A student who was another of John Kirwan's finds for the 2003 Six Nations where he started all games.
- Born at L'Aquila, he has come into contention from the national U21 and A sides. Played for his local L'Aquila club and then moved to Parma.



17 **Salvatore Perugini (Stade Toulousain, France)**

- **06.03.78** **1.80m** **111kgs**
- **48th cap (if he plays) – no pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v Ireland**
- 8th test v Ireland – no pts
- 3 games at RWC2007
- Squad member now of the last 8 Six Nations series, every series played by Italy.
- Test debut v Ireland in 2000 when selected by former coach Brad Johnstone, he had come through the U19 and U21 set-ups
- Joined Calvisano in 2002 after 5 seasons with L'Aquila, left Calvisano in summer 2006 to join Toulouse, after winning the 2005 Italian Championship
- Semi finals of 2007 French Championship

18 **Carlos Nieto (Gloucester Rugby, England)**

- **25.06.76** **1.86m** **110kgs**
- **22nd cap (if he plays) – no pts**
- **Debut: 2002 v England**
- 2nd test v Ireland – no pts
- Capped v England in 2002 (9-45), he was recalled after 3 years in the wilderness by Pierre Berbizier for the 2005 summer tour to Argentina and Australia, and then the autumn tests. Is now an integral part of the squad
- Argentina-born at La Plata, and arrived in Italy in 2000 to play for Gran Parma, now with Viadana.
- Was with the A team in his three year absence from the full national team.
- Moved to Gloucester for 2006-07 to join Bortolami, and his former Italian clubs were Parma (2001-04) and then Viadana (2004-06)

19 **Tommaso Reato (Rovigo)**

- **12.05.84** **1.96m** **102kgs**
- **First cap (if he plays)**
- Also from the national U21 side in their World Cup in 2004 in Scotland, he was born in Rovigo, and has come through the club system.
- Highly rated by the Italians, and in Nick Mallett's first squad

20 **Alessandro Zanni (Calvisano)**

- **31.01.84** **1.93m** **99kgs**
- **18th cap (if he plays) - 1T = 5pts**
- **Debut: 2005 v Tonga**
- 3rd test v Ireland – no pts
- Played in RWC2007 opener v NZ, and was injured
- Returned to play v Scotland 2007 in record win, for injured Josh Sole, after Zanni withdrew from original squads due to injury
- Played in the three autumn tests in 2005, starting the final test v Fiji at Monza, and in 8 tests in 2006 (2 starts) with a try in the last 2006 test v Canada (41-6)
- From the 2005 Italian champions, he began his career with Rugby Udine
- He is viewed as one for the future, and has been monitored through the youth, U21 and A national teams.



21 **Andrea Marcato (Treviso)**

- **17.04.83** **1.83m** **80kgs**
- **3rd cap (if he plays) 3C = 6pts**
- **Debut: 2006 v Japan**
- 1st test v Ireland
- Capped as sub v Japan on 2006 summer tour (3C) and then v Portugal in RWC qualifier (83-0)
- Captain of the Italian U21 side for their World Cup in Scotland in 2004, he went on the full tour under Pierre Berbizier to Argentina in 2005, but only played v Argentina XV
- Is from Padova and played for the local club, before a recent move

22 **Ezio Galon (Overmach Parma)**

- **22.07.77** **1.86m** **91kgs**
- **15th cap (if he plays) - 1T = 5pts**
- **Debut: 2001 v Ireland**
- 4th test v Ireland – no pts
- Sub in 3 of the 4 RWC2007 games
- 1st try v Wales in 2006 draw 18-18 but close to deadball line.
- Capped for the first time v Ireland in 2001 as a sub for Corrado Pilat (22-41), then recalled 4yrs later at full back for the 3 autumn series tests in 2005.
- Has been back in the squad since the 2006 Six Nations
- Formerly with hometown team Treviso, moved to his present club in from French rugby in 2005.
- Played in France for La Rochelle, Bourgoin, and Lyon, and played for Italy at all levels.

Coach

Nick Mallett

- **30.10.56**
- Took over from Pierre Berbizier after RWC2007 (03.10.07)
- Coaching career: Rovigo (1984-85), St Claude (France)(1985-90), Boland (1995-96), South Africa (1997-2000), Stade Francais (2000-04), and now Italy from October 2007.
- Playing career: Western Province 1977-85, Oxford University 1979-80, Rovigo and St Claude. Two caps for SA v 1984 South America XV
- Oxford Blue in Rugby and Cricket – once hit Ian Botham for 3 sixes in an over
- Coached SA to world record equalling 17 straight wins from 1997-98 but failed to retain RWC in 1999
- Coached Stade Francais to 2003 and 2004 French Championship
- Born at Haileybury, England, moved to Rhodesia when six weeks old, and to South Africa at 7yrs