

## Charlton Park 21 Medway 40 (London South 1)

03rd October 2015

Early season form, and reports of a weakened Charlton Park squad through injury and suspension, indicated Medway had a good chance of getting a result at a ground that has, over past seasons, not been a happy hunting ground for Medway. And so it proved, Medway did come from Kidbrooke with a useful win, but were made to work hard for their victory by a typical physical performance from their South London hosts. The visitors scored five tries whereas Charlton could only manage two, and each side kicked three penalties. Like last week, Medway recorded a bonus point win without playing that well. Their performance was a little better, but still contained too many errors which meant they were never really able to string phases together, and play the quick tempo rugby they strive to achieve.

Medway opened the game well, with Jimmy Rutherford retrieving their own kick off and following a couple of phases, winning a penalty on the Charlton 22. Dan Harvey knocked over the kick and Medway were 3 – 0 up after only 2 minutes. Most of the first half was a tight battle as Charlton kept Medway pinned back in their own half without ever really threatening the visitors try line. The two teams traded penalties and Medway approached half time with a slender 9 – 6 lead. However, just before the break, and following a period of sustained pressure on the Charlton line, the Medway pack did well to drive their hosts over for Ben Dance to score his first try. This put daylight between the two teams as Medway now led 14 – 6 at the interval.

Medway opened the second half playing much better and within 8 minutes has extended their lead to 26 – 9 through a second try for Ben Dance, more good work by the forwards, and then a superb try for the backs, finished off by Sammy Garofalo. Just as the game looked comfortable, Medway gave Charlton turn over ball, and they scored an excellent try out wide on the left. A fine conversion narrowed the score line to 26 – 16 and one wondered if the game was not dead after all.

With Medway's scrum now in full control, the forwards settled the game mid-way through the half with two more tries scored by Max Easton and Billy Sandison. Excellent conversion kicking from Dan Harvey helped extend the lead, but Charlton did manage a consolation try themselves.

Overall, a good away win, but we have seen the team play better. Medway's forwards were good and won the game. Charlton were tough opponents, good in possession, and never let the visitors settle into their game pattern.

Next week Medway face Chiswick at Priestfields in the first ever meeting between the two clubs.

Medway's team;

Mataapa, Humphrey, L Johnson, Easton, Rutherford, Huntley, Beaumont, B Dance, J Dance, Harvey, Garofalo, Tila, Liua'ana, Burns, Wardzynski, Subs; Sandison, Brice, Weobley (all used).