

Charlton Park (II) 10 Medway (Extra 1st XV) 69 - 07th November 2015

After yet another week off, Medway's Extra 1st XV made their way to Charlton Park keen to build on their improving performances. Once again the side had to contend with a number of unavailability's and injuries within the club which resulted in this side having a number of enforced changes from their last game. This wasn't helped when flanker Tom Sandison got called in to work during the warm up and so a couple of quick redeployments were necessary.

The lack of selection continuity showed as for the first twenty minutes Medway were disorganised, unable to keep possession and looking like a team that had only been introduced to each other at kick off. It was no surprise then when Charlton Park exploited this uncertainty and lack of cohesion to open the scoring with a simple 3 on 1 allowing their winger to touch down for a 5 – 0 lead. Medway still refused to wake up and they were fortunate not to concede again as their defence was definitely not at its best. On the plus side the forwards were enjoying early scrum dominance, a trait that continued all game, and this at least was allowing Medway to have some form of attacking platform. Medway took the lead after fifteen minutes with a converted try and the score continued to tick over as Medway made the most of the broken play caused by both teams inability to retain possession by playing sensible, structured rugby. At half time Medway had a 5 -33 lead with tries from the Burns brothers, Rose, Catlin and Chalmers but it had been a less than convincing display. Coach Essenhigh's instructions were quite clear – stop throwing the ball about like it was some sort of exhibition match, play to our systems, play with structure, get organised in defence and don't let them score in the second half.

With this message ringing in their ears Medway failed to secure the restart, Charlton Park were awarded a penalty, Medway failed to get organised, Charlton Park took it quickly and scored in the corner resulting in Coach Essenhigh asking if his half time team talk had been delivered in Latin. Medway now started to play some decent rugby on the back of excellent scrummaging and superior all round fitness levels but even so, there were still plenty of mistakes being made and once again they were fortunate not to concede. The second half was notable only for the appearance of Jordan Stubbington in his first 2nd XV game who took to this level well and didn't look at all out of place and for the running discussions between skipper Bobby Ellis and the ref on the finer arts of the front row. With more tries coming from Rumsey, Catlin, Chalmers and the Burns' and Ellis kicking well the final whistle went with Medway running out 10 – 69 winners.

Whilst this was a high scoring game and the lads worked hard, it was far from the standard that we know this side is capable of and there is much to work on. However, a win is a win and with continued work and a bit of luck in terms of injuries etc. there is a lot more to come.

Squad: Sam Brice, Mark Coveney, Ross Cooley, Luke Osborne, Dan Goodall, Tom Sandison, Max Rose, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, John Rumsey, Bobby Ellis, Matt Brightman, Luke Burns, Sam Catlin, Conor Chalmers, Rhys Burns, Mo Pangarker, Jordan Stubbington

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