

## **Medway 32 Chobham 10 (London South 1) – 6th February 2016**

On an extremely windy afternoon, Medway blew visitors Chobham away with a stunning first half performance scoring four excellent tries. They were 26 – 3 up at the interval having played some sublime rugby and with a workmanlike second half display, secured a comfortable home win against a strong Chobham team.

The locals chose to play into the wind in the first half and as the conditions meant kicking wasn't an option, ran the ball at every opportunity. From the start it was clear that their tails were up and they meant business. The first few attacks were stopped by good Chobham defence, but after only four minutes, full back Sammy Garofalo returned a loose clearance kick with interest. The ball was quickly recycled out to Leo Luia'ana who dummied and beat the covering defenders to score an excellent individual try just to the right of the posts. Harvey added the extras and Medway had made the perfect start.

Things got even better after eleven minutes when they doubled their lead. Wave after wave of Medway attack resulted in the ref signalling a penalty advantage to Medway. Quick thinking by scrum half James Dance with the "free ball" saw him do a cheeky cross field kick to his brother Ben wide on the left. Ben managed to off-load to supporting Luke Burns who did well to score in the corner. Harvey's touch line conversion, into a 50 mph wind, seemed impossible but incredibly, somehow, he managed to get it over! 14 – 0 to Medway.

Medway played perfect rugby given the windy conditions, and dominated possession for most of the first half allowing Chobham very few attacking opportunities. On the half hour mark, again they went through countless phases and as Chobham ran out of defenders, Luke Burns grabbed his second try with a good strong finish. Three minutes later, running again from their own half, Joe Fernyhough, Matt Gardner, and Ben Dance combined to release James Dance to sprint in from 35 metres and secure the bonus point try. Chobham replied with a simple penalty just before the interval. Half time 26 – 3.

Understandably, Medway were unable to maintain the intensity in the second period and Chobham came into the game with a more equal share of possession. Medway kicked two simple penalties after three and fifteen minutes and Chobham were awarded a penalty try, after five minutes, when Medway illegally pulled down a driving maul close to their line. The final twenty minutes saw both sides "going through the motions" as the result was settled.

An outstanding performance by the whole team. The front five were tremendous; loose head prop Richard Petch was awarded man of the match; Jimmy Rutherford, Joe Fernyhough, Max Easton, Matt Gardner and Dan Huntley carried tirelessly all afternoon. Half backs Dance and Harvey managed the game "just right" and the wide backs took their opportunities scoring all four tries. Coaches Gwilliam and Longstaff were suitably delighted with their teams' performance.

Medway entertain third placed Sidcup in a tough fixture next week at Priestfields, kick-off 2.30pm.

Medway's team;

Petch, Sandison, O'Leary, Easton, Rutherford, Huntley, Fernyhough, Gardner, J Dance, Harvey, Burns, B Dance, Liua'ana, Ebanks, Garofalo Subs; M Matappa, Morant and Ellis (all used).