

## Medway (Dev) 63 Thanet Wanderers (II) 0 - 14th November 2015

Medway's Development Squad welcomed Thanet Wanderers to a blustery Priestfield looking to maintain their unbeaten run and to continue the pressure on the teams at the top end of the table.

Medway kicked off with the strong wind behind them but, with two of the forwards in front of the kicker, Thanet were immediately gifted the ball. The half-way scrum didn't go their way however as Medway's forwards took early control and gave notice that this was going to be a very hard day for the Thanet pack. The resulting win against the head gave Medway good possession which they built on solidly as prop Sam Brice picked a great line and made twenty metres before losing the ball in the tackle. Thanet cleared their lines but Medway were straight back on the attack from the lineout as the backs ignored the now horrible conditions and sent the ball through the hands, setting full back Matt Cross free on the wing to score under the posts. Alfie Orris secured the extras and Medway were off and running at 7 – 0.

Medway continued to build the pressure spending most of the game in the Thanet half where two kickable penalties allowed them to increase their lead to 13 – 0. Thanet were finding it hard to get out of their half playing in to the now very strong wind and Medway made the most of it getting a lineout just inside the twenty-two which they secured well and then drove to the line with Toby Gerdes-Hansen controlling things well before scoring to increase the lead to 18 – 0. The forwards were having a good day at the set piece and when a good kick chase from winger Adam Dady forced a Thanet knock-on, the forwards stepped up to the scrum and pushed Thanet back ten metres allowing Jordan Stubbington to pick up from the base and crash on to the line. Another successful Orris conversion moved the score to 25 – 0 but Medway weren't done with the first half just yet. With the wind giving the hookers a tough time throwing in at the lineouts, Thanet were penalised for not throwing straight and Medway took the scrum which guaranteed them possession. Quick ball from the base released centre Sam Sharpe who beat two defenders before timing his offload perfectly to Sean Crittenden who ran in unopposed under the posts and the half ended with Medway holding a 32 – 0 lead.

With Medway now playing into the wind Coach Jenkins had been clear on what he expected in terms of defence to the kick and gave instructions for the ball to be kept in hand when attacking.

For the first time in living memory the lads actually stuck to the game plan from the kick off and they were on the scoreboard again ten minutes later as the forwards again stole a lineout and set the backs off first out right and then back left where scrum-half Sean Marriott took the ball and cut through a disorganised Thanet defence to score and increase the lead to 37 – 0. Thanet now began to use the wind well and finally managed some periods of possession which saw them play some good rugby in the Medway half two but the defence held and a good counter ruck saw Medway steal the ball and send it out right to winger Des Dickson who showed his pace as he outstripped the Thanet defence to run in and score from the Medway twenty-two. Orris again converted and the score moved on to 44 – 0. In fairness to Thanet they kept working hard and Medway were forced to spend some periods in their own half but they made the most of every mistake that Thanet made one of which saw Medway again steal Thanet's line-out and quick ball to Viktor Kopylov saw him charge down the left wing making thirty yards before being tackled. The ball was secured quickly and fed to prop Sam Brice who arrived at full pace ten yards out with the inevitable outcome – another try and a 51 – 0 lead. Medway still weren't done and the next try came from Alfie Orris who capped off a good afternoon with the boot with an excellent run through a now tired Thanet defence for another seven pointer and a 58 – 0 lead. The final try came as the forwards once again pushed Thanet back allowing Stubbington to pick up and beat twobdefenders on his way to the line for a final score of 63 – 0.

This was an excellent performance from Medway who played probably their best rugby so far this season – perhaps we should hope for strong winds and rain every Saturday until the end of the season ! Credit must also go to Thanet who gave it everything, played the game in the right spirit and were good company after the game. We wish them well for the rest of season and look forward to the return fixture.

Squad: Sam Brice, Mark Coveney, John Duggan, Luke Osborne, Dan Goodall, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, Ben Shove, Jordan Stubbington, Sean Marriott, Alfie Orris, Adam Day, Sam Sharpe, Sean Marriott, Des Dickson, Matt Cross, Lewis Marriott, Matt Callow, Viktor Kopylov

Tries: Cross, Gerdes-Hansen, Stubbington (2), Marriott (S), Dickson, Brice, Orris