

## Medway (Extra Dev) 32 Vigo (I) 7 - 24th October 2015

With a high number of players unavailable and with a couple of last minute dropouts, the Dev Extras had no choice but to call on the services of the Crusaders for this home game against a good Vigo side. Once again the combination of youth and experience produced some good quality rugby as well as some light hearted moments that brightened up a dull afternoon.

The first half started with a cobbled together pack getting to know each other and having a few lineout problems as a result. However their scrummaging disrupted Vigo right from the kick off and with No. 8 'Bear' Stapleton working well at the back on Medway ball and scrum half Matt Wadhams making his opposite numbers life very difficult on Vigo ball, they began to get a foothold. Both sides missed early opportunities to open the score with kickable penalties but it was Medway who were posing the biggest threat as their backs looked dangerous every time they got the ball. Both sides were making handling errors and with neither side really settling down and taking charge the game was bit scrappy albeit both sides were certainly putting in the effort. Whilst the half ended scoreless Medway were probably the happier of the two sides and with the wind at their backs for the second half Coach Jenkins was clear on what he wanted – play the game in their half, keep up the pressure, keep things simple and don't force it.

The lads obviously listened and they opened the score soon after the restart as the forwards won the ball against the head at the first scrum allowing the backs to move the ball first out right and then back left. The speed of the movement caught Vigo off guard and quick hands saw Mark Shepherd score their first try as he outpaced the Vigo full back to cross the line and open the scoring. At 5 – 0 up Medway were soon on the attack again but their next try was a solo effort from Wadhams who took a quick tap penalty just inside the Medway half before beating every Vigo defender to score down the right wing. A successful conversion saw the lead increase to 7 – 0 but Vigo came back strongly forcing a number of penalties on the five metre line which resulted in a yellow card for Medway as he understandably lost patience with the high count. Vigo took advantage as quick ball from a lineout saw their centre crash over the line for a converted try to close the score to 12 – 7. Medway now down to fourteen came straight back and spent the next five minutes camped in the Vigo twenty-two where the forwards applied plenty of pressure so much so that Vigo lost a prop to injury resulting in the scrums becoming uncontested. Medway nearly scored again as second row Charlie Grant took the ball at pace and crashed through the Vigo defence finally being tackled a few feet from the try line and then being penalised for making a double movement to score. Vigo kicked to clear but missed touch and the backs again took the ball forward before offloading to prop Tony

Cohen who had found himself in the way ! Faced with the choice of passing quickly or making the most of this bulk, he sensibly chose the latter and set off straight through the Vigo defence and back into their twenty-two before finally being brought down. Quick ball from the ruck found Tom Bourne in space and he made the most of his pace to round the Vigo defenders to score and increase Medway's lead to 17 – 7. They increased this a few minutes later when another quickly taken penalty saw Micky Hutton sprint in for a 22 – 7 lead. Not wanting to be out done, the forwards now contributed tries as yet another turn over saw Sol Cooper charge through a disorganised defence to make the score 27 – 7 which quickly became 32 – 7 as Mo ` I Can Only Give You Fifteen Minutes' O'Brien ended his 80<sup>th</sup> minute on the pitch with a well taken try. As the whistle went Medway ran out deserved winners.

Vigo fought hard for the entire game and we thank them for playing the game in the right spirit. A big thank you also to the ref who controlled the game well and allowed it to flow. This was a good performance from a Medway team that had only really come together on the day but they showed what can be done with some power and experience up front and some pace and inventiveness in the backs. Everyone contributed and gave everything for the cause (including the contents of a stomach – you know who you are) and as skipper Hutton said in the final huddle 'Nobody complained or moaned – everybody was positive for the entire 80 minutes and we've all enjoyed it'. And surely that's what it's all about. Well done lads.

**Squad:** Jimmy Weighell, Sean Whiting, Tony Cohen, Mark Farbrace, Mo O'Brien, Joe Earl, Sol Cooper, Glen Stapleton, Matt Wadhams, Mark Shepherd, Olli Baker, Tom Bourne, James Avery, Micky Hutton, Stan Orris, Rob O'Brien, Charlie Grant

**Tries:** Shepherd, Wadhams, Bourne, Hutton, Cooper, O'Brien (M)