

Maidstone II 0 Medway Extra 1st XV 46 - 12th November 2016

The Extras made the short trip to a damp and misty Maidstone looking to put in a better performance than the one that saw them lose to Beckenham the week before.

They started solidly enough but were still slow to get into their stride causing Coach Essenhigh to shout the instruction of 'If you're going to walk, walk quicker than them !' These words of encouragement had some effect as Medway got themselves into the Maidstone half with some determined running from the forwards, most notably flanker Bear Stapleton back after a layoff with a shoulder injury. Indeed it was his second line break that set up a scrappy first try as he tried an offload that didn't go to hand but was hacked on by No.8 Jordan Stubbington. He and winger Ben Wellard chased after it and hacked it on again and as the ball rolled over the try line it was Wellard who dived on it first touching down for a 0 - 5 lead. Medway dealt well with the restart and were soon on the attack again as some accurate territorial kicking from fly half Alfie Orris supported by some good chases from the backs kept Maidstone pinned back. When they kicked to clear they only managed to get to their twenty-two and a good Medway line-out saw the ball sent along the backs at pace getting them onto the five metre line before some desperate Maidstone defence stopped them. As the ball came back into midfield Medway knocked on but the forwards were now beginning to dominate the scrum and when hooker Coveney struck against the head the pack eased their way forward with Stubbington controlling well at the back before diving on the ball for the second try. Orris converted and Maidstone restarted 0 - 12 down. For the next few minutes Maidstone pressed hard but Medway defended well winning a turn over at a ruck which allowed the backs to run the ball out of defence. Full back Burns set off at pace out on the wing and as he crossed the half way line he grubber kicked inside for Orris and Brightman to chase. The covering Maidstone player knocked on and when Medway again secured the ball with some ease from the scrum the ball found centre Mitch Dent who showed what a dangerous runner he can be as he set off from halfway beating three defenders to touch down under the posts and a 0 - 19 lead. Maidstone were finding it hard to get into any rhythm and the Medway backs were proving to be difficult to defend against as they once again ran the ball comfortably out of defence. Burns again kicked through and was taken out late resulting in a yellow card for the Maidstone player and another three points for Medway giving them a 0 - 22 lead at half time.

The second half started with Medway on the attack. They were going sensibly though the phases and building pressure and when Maidstone did get the chance to clear they missed touch allowing Wellard to run the ball straight back at them. He beat two defenders before finding Sam Sharpe on his shoulder who took the ball and beat the entire defensive line as he ran through under the posts for a 0 - 29 lead. Maidstone suffered a number of injuries which saw them playing people out of position and this affected their defence allowing Medway to make ground every time they ran at them. They soon conceded again as Stubbington took the ball on the half way line and charged through at pace touching down in the corner without a Maidstone defender getting a hand on him. With the score now at 0 -34 Medway were camped in the Maidstone half and their next try came from yet another turn over by Man of the Match Stapleton. The ball was sent quickly along the backs to winger Matt Brightman who showed real pace and good footwork to beat two defenders from just inside the Maidstone half before touching down to make the score 0 - 39. The final try came as Orris kicked through and a good chase from Brightman and Sharpe put pressure on the Maidstone backs who fumbled the ball. Brightman recovered it and fed scrum half Rob O'Brien who sent the ball out quickly through the hands until it found Orris who finished well and then converted his try to make the score 0 - 46. By now Maidstone had lost five players to injuries and so with only thirteen players left on the pitch the game ended twelve minutes early with Medway running out deserved winners 0 - 46.

This was a better performance from the Extras who know that they still have a lot to work on and so the message has to be 'get to training !'. Our thanks to Maidstone for being excellent hosts as always - we hope that their injured players recover quickly. Thanks also to ref Mr Baker who took control early on and played his part in keeping the game flowing.

SB

Medway Squad: John Dugan, Mark Coveney, Ross Cooley, Dan Goodall, Tom Coleman, Ben Shove, Bear Stapleton, Jordan Stubbington, Rob O'Brien, Alfie Orris, Ben Wellard, Mitch Dent, Sam Sharpe, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Dan O'Brien, Paul Morant