

Medway Extra 1st XV 26 Sevenoaks II 19 (Invicta Cup)

22nd October 2016

Sevenoaks made the trip to Priestfields for the second time this season but this time to do battle with Medway's Extra's in the newly created Invicta Cup. Having won the league encounter a few weeks ago the visitors were rightly confident but an improved Medway performance was evident on this occasion.

The first fifteen minutes were pretty uneventful as both teams tried to find some rhythm but with a number of knock-ons, missed passes and penalties preventing the game from flowing it was a bit of a 'stop - start' affair. Medway were first to score as they finally realised that going wide instead of charging up the middle may be the answer (sound familiar ?) as centre Sam Sharpe broke a tackle just inside his own half and passed to winger Rhys Burns who made good ground before passing inside to Bobby Ellis. Ellis showed his experience in the ensuing two-on-one delaying the pass back to Burns perfectly for an excellent try and, following a Rumsey conversion, a 7 - 0 lead. With Coach Collings (standing in for the absent Essenhigh) encouraging the lads to keep control of the ball and maintain their discipline, Medway lost the ball in contact and were then reduced to fourteen men as Sharpe was rightly shown a yellow card for a tackle related penalty. Sevenoaks kicked to touch, secured the lineout and drove to the Medway line where some solid defence held them up. The relief was short lived however as from the scrum the Sevenoaks No.8 picked up and dived over to level the scores at 7 - 7. Medway came straight back spending some time in the oppositions twenty-two but when they knocked on on the five metre line Sevenoaks had the chance to clear their lines. However the Medway pack, who have scrummaged well in every game, had other ideas as they carried on their great work winning the ball against the head and sending the Sevenoaks pack backwards. With No.8 Ben Dance controlling the ball well at the back the try was inevitable as he dived on it for a 14 - 7 lead. With half time approaching Medway were looking more in control, aided by a Sevenoaks yellow card for a dangerous tackle, but the opposition were also looking dangerous on turnover ball which Medway were gifting them all too often. The last action of the half saw Rumsey put in a huge clearing kick with sent Sevenoaks back into their half and when Max Easton stole the lineout Medway were back on the attack and making ground towards the posts. This time they were able to maintain possession at the rucks allowing the ball to be quickly sent out to Sharpe who ran in for Medway's third try and a 21 - 7 lead at half time.

Medway started the second half in determined fashion as a good kick chase from the restart put pressure on the Sevenoaks defence deep in their twenty-two forcing a knock-on and a Medway scrum. Once again the forwards held firm giving a good platform for the backs to run. As they went through the phases, second row Dan Goodall hit the line at pace driving the defensive line back to the try line where some desperate defence kept Medway out until Dance picked up from the back of a ruck and dived under two tacklers to touch down for his second, Medway's fourth and a 26 - 7 lead. At this point Medway needed to keep calm, do the basics well and look to close out the game but Sevenoaks reacted well and, aided by some sloppy defending and missed tackles, they managed to get a foothold in the Medway twenty-two and when a clearing kick was charged down their winger reacted first picking the ball up and running in to narrow the gap to 26 - 14. Medway now looked to close the game out and some good territorial kicking looked like it was going to do it until one kick failed to reach touch and the Sevenoaks winger ran it back from his twenty-two though three missed tackles and over the line for a 26 - 19 scoreline. This was the last score of the game as Medway then successfully ran down the clock in the Sevenoaks half to secure a place in the Invicta Cup semi-finals.

This was a good win for the Extra's who once again showed some real glimpses of what they are capable of once they can find the consistency. Our thanks go to Sevenoaks who, as always, provided very stiff opposition and were gracious in defeat. We look forward to seeing them again towards the end of the season when we visit them in the league. Our thanks also to referee Mr Jolley who stepped in at the last minute to officiate, got both yellow cards right - and then got blocked in the car park and couldn't get home !! Sorry Sir !

Medway squad: Andy Connell, Mark Coveney, Al Waterman, Dan Goodall, Max Easton, Ben Shove, Paul Morant, Ben Dance, Sam Garofalo, Si Rumsey, Matt Brightman, Sam Sharpe, Bobby Ellis, Rhys Burns, Steve Stuart, Ben Wellard, Ben Edgar, Huw Collings, Matt Petch