

Medway Extra 62 Gravesend (II) 12 - 26th November 2016

Gravesend made the trip to Priestfields to face an Extra's side that was keen to get back into action after yet another week off.

Gravesend kicked off and were almost immediately behind as Doug Ebanks took the ball and ran it from inside his twenty-two deep into Gravesend territory before he was finally tackled. Fortunately for Gravesend his attempted offload to supporting winger Matt Brightman was forward which prevented a certain try - unfortunately for Doug he suffered a knock to the head in the tackle and would play no further part in the game. His fantastic run had got Medway onto the five metre line and with the first scrum of the game their forwards set about dominating the set piece as they won the ball against the head. Quick ball along the backs to winger Ben Edgar saw him touch down in the corner and Medway were 5 - 0 up after less than a minute. Gravesend restarted but went further behind a few minutes later as Medway managed it well and sent their backs forward with pace and precision allowing full back Rhys Burns to get to the five metre line before losing the ball forward in a tackle. The forwards again won the ball against the head and with No.8 Toby Gerdes-Hansen controlling well at the back they pushed the Gravesend pack over the line with ease before he fell on the ball for a 10 - 0 lead. Rumsey added the extra's and Gravesend restarted 12 - 0 down. Medway came straight back on the attack with a great break from second row Dan Goodall who broke through three tackles in his carry of twenty yards before a penalty allowed Medway to kick to touch. They won their line-out and quickly sent the ball to centre Sam Sharpe who smashed through the defence before reaching the line where a desperate tackle stopped him just short of the line. Winger Matt Brightman, as always in support, was the first to react, picking up and burrowing under the bodies to touch down and with another successful Rumsey conversion Medway had a 19 - 0 lead. The lead was stretched even further a few minutes later as another break, this time from Ben Shove, saw Medway make more easy ground before a kick through from Rumsey was knocked on by the Gravesend full back under pressure from Sharpe, Burns and Brightman who had chased well. The forwards were dominant and quick ball released Burns who touched scored for a 26 - 0 lead. Medway were then guilty of a string of penalties which allowed Gravesend to gain territory from kicks to touch and they eventually scored from a simple catch and drive. Medway restarted 26 - 7 up but they increased their lead immediately as centre Bobby Ellis intercepted a pass and got to the five metre line before being stopped. Scrum half Sam Garofalo was first to the ruck picking up the ball and diving for the line only to be stopped a few metres short. By now the forwards had arrived and drove the Gravesend defenders back allowing Shove to score. Half time saw Medway with a very healthy 31 - 7 lead.

Medway started the second half keen to keep the pressure up and they scored their sixth try within minutes of the restart as the forwards smashed the ball up field to the halfway line before Sharpe took a quick inside ball, evaded two tackles and ran in an easy score. At 38 - 7 down Gravesend were next to score as another catch and drive from a line-out got them over the line to reduce the lead to 38 -12 but Medway's confidence was not to be dampened as they now looked to run the ball from everywhere. Their seventh try came as Brightman took a long clearing kick deep in his twenty-two and set off at pace putting all of the backs onside before the ball was sent along the line to find replacement centre Mitch Dent who showed what a dangerous runner he can be as he beat two tackles making a clean break into the Gravesend half. He offloaded superbly to Sharpe in the tackle who had an easy job of running in to score under the posts and give Medway a 45 - 12 lead. With a yellow card for both teams scrums became uncontested but this made no difference to Medway's attacking threat as Garofalo fed Ellis who ran through an undefended gap to make the score 52 - 12. By now it was all Medway and yet more clinical finishing saw replacement winger Ben Wellard take the ball out wide following another flowing move through the backs and run in the ninth try for a score of 57 - 12. The final try came when Ellis again broke free to score Medway's tenth which made the final score 62 - 12.

This was an excellent performance from the Extra's who combined the forward's power and dominance with the backs skill, pace and precision to put on a show of classy rugby. Our thanks to Gravesend who, despite the mounting score, did what a Gravesend team always does - give it everything for the full 80 minutes. Our thanks also to ref Mr Smith who had a good game and dealt with some rising tensions decisively.

Medway Squad: Cap Tain, Andy Connell, Al Waterman, Dan Goodall, Ben Shove, Tom Coleman, Bear Stapleton, Doug Ebanks, Sam Garofalo, Si Rumsey, Ben Edgar, Bobby Ellis, Sam Sharpe, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Ben Wellard, Mitch Dent, Toby Gerdes-Hansen