

## Old Alleynians II 22 v Medway Extra 44 - 10th December 2016

The Extras made the trip to South East London for their last game before the Christmas break keen to build on their recent form.

They started brightly with the forwards showing early dominance in the scrum and the backs showing pace and a willingness to run. They had the better of the first ten minutes and should have been ahead but every time they posed a threat their discipline let them down giving OA's the penalties they needed to clear their lines. Eventually however the pressure told when Medway were awarded a penalty on the five metre line. They chose the scrum allowing the forwards to secure the ball and then take their time in setting and pushing OA's back over the line before both Gerdes-Hansen and Sandison fell on the ball to open the scoring. Fly half Rumsey converted the try for a 0 - 7 lead. OA's restarted but kicked the ball out on the full allowing the Medway pack to exert yet more pressure in the half way line scrum, securing possession and allowing Rumsey to kick for position. The kick was chased well by Sharpe and Brightman who gave the OA full back no room to manoeuvre bundling him into touch on the twenty-two. Medway won their line-out and quick ball sent the backs moving with Dent taking the ball at pace and breaking the OA defensive line before touching down for a well worked try. Another Rumsey conversion moved the score to 0 - 14 and Medway seemed to have settled well. They were soon pegged back however when yet another string of penalties gave OA's good field position in the Medway twenty-two where quick ball from a line-out saw them move the ball along the backs to their winger who, helped by two missed tackles, touched down to cut the lead to 7 - 14. The game now became very scrappy with neither team playing to any structure and as the players began to get frustrated the penalty count rose allowing Rumsey to add six more points before half time. As the whistle went Medway were leading 7 - 20.

In the half time break OA's withdrew a prop due to injury which meant that Medway had lost a sound attacking platform as the game went to uncontested scrums. Their next score however was from a scrum as, from ten yards out, Gerdes-Hansen picked up from the base and drove to the five metre line before quick ball from the ruck released full back Burns who touched down in the corner to increase the lead to 7 - 25. OA's fought back with a try from a kick through which allowed their winger to pick up the loose ball to make the score 12 - 25 but Medway replied quickly as Rumsey again kicked deep and Ellis and Ward, on for the injured Sandison, chased hard causing a turn over. Medway reacted quickly and sent the ball out right with the final pass reaching winger Brightman who set off for the corner and finished well touching down to make the score 12 - 30. Medway were now on top and they increased their lead after yet another series of scrums on the OAs five metre line saw prop Andy Connell pick up from the base of a ruck and dive over the bodies on the ground to score under the posts. Another Rumsey conversion moved the score to 12 - 37 which was extended minutes later when Sharpe ripped the ball from the OA's winger in a tackle and set off at pace from the halfway line beating three defenders before scoring under the posts for a superb individual try. At 12 - 44 it would have been easy for OA's to give up but to their credit they continued to play some good rugby scoring two tries in the last ten minutes the second of which was probably the best of the match as some excellent off-loading saw them score under the posts for a final score of 24 - 44.

This was not the Extras's best performance of the season with too many penalties being conceded and the previous nights Christmas parties taking their toll in terms of fitness in the last ten minutes. However, they were able to field an almost unchanged team for the third game in a row and running in six tries against a very determined OA's side must always be looked on positively. Our thanks to OA's for a tough game and for being excellent hosts. Thanks also to our French ref without whom we would not have had a game.

**Medway Squad:** Andy Connell, Mark Coveney, Al Waterman, Dan Goodall, Ben Shove, Tom Coleman, Tom Sandison, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, Sean Marriott, Si Rumsey, Bobby Ellis, Sam Sharpe, Mitch Dent, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Paul Ward