

## Medway Extra 1st 84 Dartfordians (II) 0 - 25th February 2017

The scoreline would suggest that this was a very one sided contest and nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is that Dartfordians were dogged opponents who contested scrums, line outs and breakdown situations fiercely. What they had not reckoned on was facing a Medway side that played intelligent rugby in difficult conditions for almost the complete 80 minutes, did not make unforced errors and who were quite literally running hot.

Darts elected to play down the slope with a considerable wind on their backs and from their kick off attacked aggressively. What they quickly found was that, much to coach Essenhigh's delight, Medway were playing with considerable composure and control and were determined not to kick possession away. Patiently they worked their way up the field with left winger Connor Chalmers proving to be a real attacking threat from anywhere on the field. Their first score came from centre Mitch Dent, who was to prove a real handful, when he powered through the defence for a score that fly half Rumsey converted. Rumsey was to have an inspired afternoon with the boot, both with a faultless 12 out of 12 from the tee and out of hand with some searing touchline kicks in the 2nd half. All the way through the contest Medway struggled with the Darts kick restarts, which were taken by their right winger and frankly where the best any of the watching coaches had seen in years. And so it was that the next try took a while to follow and more patient play saw Dent finish the move off. Medway were letting the ball do the work and bringing runners onto the ball with great effect. Man of the Match Chalmers raced away along the touchline for the next try that Rumsey converted from the touchline into the teeth of the gale. Then trapped 10 yards from their own line Medway's "PJ" Ward broke the defence, charged 35 yards and was then relieved to pass to the supporting Sammy Garofolo who raced away for the score. With hooker Mark Coveney suffering from a "surfeit of eels" he was replaced after 20 minutes by Ross Cooley, who in support of play darted over from 2 feet to score the next try. The first half finished on a high note when a passage of strong running and interpassing saw the ball shift right and Rumsey threw a glorious cut out pass to right wing Matt Brightman who with 35 yards to go and several defenders to beat finished the move with aplomb. HT 42-0.

Despite now facing into the wind and slope Darts came out for the 2nd half and seemed even more determined and through close driving play and hard running pushed Medway back into their 22 for the first 15 minutes of the half and the 2nd half was proving to be a close contest. Then that man Chalmers turned on the after burners again to race clear and score. Medway were now playing quick running rugby and Tom "Admiral" Brown found himself the recipient of a pass 15 yards out which he comfortably took to score. 56 -0. Coach Essenhigh then rang the changes and brought on Steve Stewart for his first game since an horrendous injury back in the autumn and it was not long before he found himself in support of more inter passing scoring a popular try. Right winger Brightman then finished 2 moves, one on the wing and one in midfield to finish a fine afternoon from him and then Ben Wellard somehow saw the ball fortuitously bounce into his hands for what is best described as a "soft try". FT: 84 -0.

If Medway played with this same level of intelligence and patience each week they could become a genuine force to reckon with and coach Essenhigh would lose some of those facial worry lines....time will tell. A big thank you to Dartfordians who never gave up and worked hard for the entire 80 minutes and it is only right to observe that the game was all the better for being refereed by Kiwi - Jordan Davies - whose quiet authority was appreciated by all playing and watching the game. Well done and thank you Sir.

E.I.Addio - your Man on the Touchline trying to keep up with play.

**Squad:** Andy Connell, Mark Coveney, Al Waterman, Dan Goodall, Tom Brown, PJ Ward, Dan O'Brien, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, Sam Garofalo, Si Rumsey, Connor Chalmers, Mitch Dent, Sam Sharpe, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Bear Stapleton, Ben Wellard, Ross Cooley, Steve Stewart