

Medway Extra 1st 40 Beckenham II 0 (Invicta 1) - 21st October 2017

The Extras welcomed Beckenham to Priestfields for the first time in three years keen to get back into action after yet another Invicta break week. With storm force winds blowing down the pitch it was always going to be hard to play smooth flowing rugby and so it proved. Medway played in to the wind in the first half and found it difficult to get going as the handling errors built up and basic skills such as looking after the ball in contact went missing. Beckenham used the wind to keep clearing the ball deep into Medway territory but they never looked dangerous on the kick chase and Medway dealt with it comfortably. The first points came from a Brad Ford penalty as Beckenham, struggling with the power of the Medway pack, put hands into a scrum in a desperate effort not to be forced off their own ball. The forwards dominance told again ten minutes later as a scrum on Beckenham's five metre line saw them pushed backwards and with No.8 Gerdes-Hansen controlling well at the back it was a simple matter of him falling on the ball to score. Beckenham restarted 10 -0 down and finally had a period of possession in the Medway twenty-two until superb work at the breakdown saw hooker Mark Coveney turn the ball over and set Medway off upfield again. Beckenham's penalty count was steadily rising allowing Medway to extend their lead to firstly to 13 - 0 and then 16 - 0 as the half time whistle went on what had been a scrappy and disjointed first half.

Medway came out for the second half determined to increase the pace and intensity of the game and with the wind now at their backs they started well, creating a number of chances out wide that weren't converted as the final pass lacked the required accuracy. Beckenham were still struggling to contain Medway's forwards at the set piece and when yet another penalty saw Medway take the line out a simple catch and drive saw Richie Desmond crash over the line for a 21 - 0 lead. Medway continued to press with Bobby Ellis, now off the wing and playing at outside centre, carrying well and breaking the defensive line but it was the forwards once more who brought Medway's third try as another dominant scrum saw scrum half Ben Wellard pick up and dive over for a 28 - 0 lead. Beckenham came back and spent some time in the Medway twenty two nearly scoring from loose play as Medway failed to get themselves organised in defence but it was another line break from Ellis that set up the fourth try as he burst through at pace before offloading to Wellard who ran in for a 35 - 0 lead. Normal service was resumed shortly after, however, as the forwards again pushed Beckenham back over their own line for Gerdes-Hansen to score his second by repeating his first and bringing the score to 40 - 0 as the final whistle went. This was a frustrating afternoon for both teams with the weather conditions definitely affecting the quality of the rugby. In the after match huddle it was pleasing to see that, despite winning 40 - 0, the Extras were very disappointed with the way that they had played. Thanks to Beckenham for never giving up and also to referee Mr Willis who had a good game.

Squad: Tom Whitnell, Mark Coveney, Andy Connell, Dan Goodall, Lyam Johnson, Dave French, Dan O'Brien, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, Ben Wellard, Brad Ford, Bobby Ellis, Rhys Townsend, Tom Sandison, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Luke Osborne, Richie Desmond, Rob Darby