

Medway Extra 31 Tonbridge Juddians III 23 - 30th September 2017

The Extra's welcomed TJ's to Priestfields for what proved to be a very scrappy game made memorable only by an exceptional kicking performance from Medway fly-half Brad Ford which ultimately won them the game. Medway started with the wind behind them and Ford used this to his advantage getting Medway on the board early on as a penalty on the TJ's ten metre line saw him slot the first of nine successful kicks. Medway were having more of the ball but some uncharacteristic poor handling and retention at the break down saw TJ's looking comfortable in defence as they looked to slow things down. This led to a number of penalties in their half which Ford slotted giving Medway a 9 - 0 lead before TJ's finally got into the Medway half and replied with three points of their own. Medway restarted from the penalty but they failed to react when a high clearance from the TJ's fly half wasn't claimed allowing it to bounce straight to a TJ's centre who ran in from half way touching down under the posts. Medway restarted 9 - 10 down but Ford, presented with yet another penalty kick in front of the posts, got them back in front. Medway seemed to have dealt with the restart but when a clearing kick failed to reach touch the TJ's backs came straight back in to the Medway half where quick and simple hands from a ruck, assisted by two missed tackles by Medway, saw their winger score in the corner. A successful conversion saw them move into a 12 - 17 lead that increased to 12 - 20 following another needless penalty. With half time looming Ford narrowed the gap with another penalty and the teams turned round with Medway trailing 15 - 20.

Medway started the second half brightly and were soon camped in the TJ's twenty-two as another string of penalties saw Ford kick to touch for territory and the line-out which was working well. When TJ's were unable to stop an excellent catch and drive, Medway seemed sure to score their first try but again they were let down by poor handling losing the ball forward. TJ's were penalised again at the resulting scrum and Ford stepped up to get Medway back to 18 - 20. Medway finally put some good phases together and the pressure told as yet another penalty saw Ford kick Medway into a 21 - 20 lead. They dealt with the restart well and when full back Rhys Burns spotted a gap in the TJ's defence he ran straight through it and set off for the line just beating the TJ's full back to touch down for Medway's only try of the game and a 28 - 20 lead. TJ's came back with a penalty but it was Ford again who sealed the win with yet another successful kick making it nine out of ten and seeing Medway run out 31 - 23 winners. This was not a classic although it did have it's moments where both sides showed what they are actually capable of. Thanks to TJ's for a hard fought game - we look forward to the return. Thanks also to referee Mr Smith without whom there wouldn't have been a game - and without whom Ford wouldn't have been able to put in a Man of the Match performance !

Squad: Andy Connell, Mark Coveney, John Dugan, Dan Goodall, Richie Desmond, Dave French, Dan O'Brien, Josh Hawkins, Ben Wellard, Brad Ford, Stan Orris, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, Sean Crittenden, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Johnny Smith, Rob O'Brien, Luke Osborne