

Medway 34 Havant 28 (London South 1) - 28th October 2017

Medway entertained, one of the pre-season favourites for promotion, Havant at Priestfields on Saturday looking to maintain their fine start to the season. This top of the table clash was eagerly awaited by both sides to test their season's aspirations. Medway kicked off with the elements at their back in the first half and were soon ahead 6 - 0 through two well struck long range penalties from Daniel Harvey. Havant responded and only fine defence from Ben Dance and Sam Sharpe prevented the visitors reply. Both teams had opportunities to score but good defence and poor ball retention ensured that there were no further scores until the 21st minute when Antony Clement sliced through the visitors defence to commit Havant's full back and put Henry Hall over for a clinical score. Harvey converted and Medway led 13-0. On 26 minutes Medway won good field position. A scrummage on the visitors 5m line saw Medway drive for the line, Havant disrupted the drive but good ball control from Jordan Stubbington saw him power over for the score. Harvey again converted and Medway were out ahead by 20 - 0. Havant came back as Medway failed to clear their lines. Some good driving play saw Medway concede consecutive penalties and Dan Huntley was sent to the bin for 10 minutes. Medway weathered the storm and broke out into the visitors half with the forwards Easton, Gardner and Beaumont all prominent. Quick ball for Clement saw him breach the visitors defensive line. The ball was moved quickly by James Dance, Dan Harvey made the half break and fed Ben Dance who put Alfie Orris away for an excellent try. The conversion gave Medway a 27 - 0 lead.

From the kick off Medway failed to clear their lines and Havant's good approach work saw them eventually score close to the posts to narrow the score to 27-7 at half time with the successful conversion. The second half saw Medway playing into the elements. However a loose kick from Havant from the kick off saw the ball fielded by Ben Dance, he linked with Alfie Orris who broke the defensive line in midfield, James Dance and Dan Harvey combined to take play up to the home line then a quick ruck saw Hall execute a two on one and put Sharpe over for the try converted by Harvey for a 34-7 lead. Although well behind Havant had recovered from 19 points the previous week to win and soon showed their character. A Medway attack was all set to add to the scoreboard but the ball went loose just short of the visitors line and they broke and went the length of the field to score a converted try and bring the score back to 34-14. With 62 minutes of the game gone Medway were penalised at the line out and Havant kicked for the corner. A well executed line out saw them break blind to score in the corner. An excellent conversion saw them further narrow the deficit to 34-21.

Havant's tails were up and aided by Medway once again turning the ball over unnecessarily on the visitors line when about score saw Havant use the ball and the elements to gain good field position. They pressured the home defence time and again but Medway held firm until finally in the 78th minute Havant scored their 4th bonus point try and got within 6 points of Medway. Medway were able to close out the last 2 minutes deep in Havant's half to secure the bonus point win. Havant although disappointed at defeat will be happy that they able to come from 34-7 down to secure both a try and losing bonus point. Medway's young side will learn some valuable lessons from this encounter but will be pleased to have gained victory in this key fixture.