

Beckenham (II) 0 Medway Extra 53 (Invicta 1) 03rd February 2018

The Extra's made the trip to Beckenham keen to put the previous weeks frustrating loss behind them and after a slow and ponderous start they did just that.

The first ten minutes were hard going with Beckenham having most of the territory and early possession but Medway defended well and soon began to make inroads of their own. Their first few sorties into the Beckenham twenty-two looked promising but on each occasion poor ball handling saw them turn the ball over allowing Beckenham to clear. As the half progressed Medway began to settle into a rhythm with the forwards dominating at the scrum and the backs, led by the centre pairing of Doug Ebanks and Luke Burns, making ground at every opportunity. It was only a matter of time before Medway broke the spirited Beckenham defence with Man of the Match Burns breaking through two tackles to score under the posts and, with a successful conversion from fly half, Hollidge Medway were off leading 0 - 7. Beckenham restarted but found themselves going further behind when a good break from full back Rhys Burns (the junior of the two Burns') got Medway back into Beckenham territory before another knock again gave Beckenham the scrum. By now the Medway pack were dominating and as they pushed their opponents back off their own ball it rolled loose allowing flanker Dan O'Brien to recover it. Quick ball to Hollidge saw him ease through a gap in Beckenham's retreating defence to score under the posts before converting his try to make it 0 - 14. Medway continued to press and they scored their third try as a Beckenham clearing kick failed to find touch allowing Burns Jnr to run it back before chipping it through for the backs to chase. Burns Snr reached it first, hacked it on further and then picked up managing to offload to Hollidge who ran in his for second try and a half time score of 0 -19.

The second half saw Medway begin to cut loose as Beckenham's defence became more disjointed providing the perfect conditions for the Medway backs to make the best of the gaps that were being created by the forwards aggressive running. Their fourth try came following another break from Ebanks who found his centre partner, Burns Snr, in support to continue the break. He made another ten yards before offloading to Burns Jnr who ran in for a 0 - 24 scoreline. Beckenham fought well but they were finding it increasingly difficult to contain a Medway team that had now found its rhythm and they fell further behind when a scrum on their five metre line saw them pushed back over the line giving number 8 Toby Gerdes-Hansen the easy task of falling on it for a 0- 31 lead. The tries now began to roll in and next to score was Sean Crittenden who took the ball wide following yet another dominant Medway scrum to finish well in the corner and extend the lead to 0 - 36. Following an injury to prop Al Waterman the game went to uncontested scrums which gave Beckenham some respite but, after some excellent defence on their five metre line, Medway again broke loose through Ebanks and Burns Snr who got into the Beckenham twenty two before finding winger Matt Brightman in support. He ran in Medway's seventh try extending the lead still further to 0 - 41. This became 0 - 46 as another good run down the left saw Crittenden stopped short of the line but Pete Ward arrived at the breakdown first picking up and scoring for a 0 -46 lead. The ninth and final try came as flanker Dave French, now at second row, found himself in the back line before taking the ball at full pace to run it in under the posts for a final score of 0 - 53.

This was a good all round performance from the Extra's with everyone playing a part. Our thanks to Beckenham for never giving up and really testing the Medway defence on more than one occasion and for contributing to a game that was played in an excellent spirit. Thanks also to referee Dr Bollet-Quivogne who was calm and assured and let the lads enjoy themselves whilst maintaining discipline.

Squad: Richard Petch, Andy Connell, Al Waterman, Dan Goodall, Johnny Smith, Dave French, Dan O'Brien, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, Rob O'Brien, Lewis Hollidge, Ben Wellard, Doug Ebanks, Luke Burns, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Pete Ward, Oscar Wells, Sean Crittenden