

Old Colfeians (II) 17 Medway Extra 35 (Invicta 1) 21st April 2018

The Extra's made the short trip to Old Colfeians for their last game of the season keen to finish with a win. They started brightly enough with the line out working well and the pace of the backs threatening to cut loose at every opportunity but despite the good start they were unable to capitalise on their early possession and fell 3 - 0 behind to penalty in front of the posts. Medway responded well and soon took the lead when a Colfs knock on gave them the scrum and with the forwards gaining the upper hand at the set piece, possession for the back was assured. They responded well sending the ball out wide to full back Zach Garratt who beat two defenders before finding centre Henry Hall on his shoulder who beat the final defender at pace to score. Brad Ford warmed up for an excellent afternoon off the tee with the conversion and a 3 - 7 lead. Medway dealt with the restart well and were soon moving upfield again as the forwards went through three phases before the ball was again sent out to the left to find Hall. He made a great break up to the Colfs ten metre line before finding centre partner Hollidge who in turn fed Garratt who showed real pace again to beat the final defender and score a converted try under the posts for a 3 - 14 lead. Colfs were finding it hard to deal with the pace of the Medway backs and the mobility of the forwards but they also posed a threat with their big second row taking the crash ball at every opportunity and, aided by some poor tackling, making some big gains for their backs to work with. Despite this period of possession and territory it was Medway who scored next when another good break from Hall set up a ruck on the Colfs twenty-two with a huge overlap on the right which was spotted by scrum half Rob O'Brien. He got the ball away quickly along the line where flanker, captain and the Extra's Player of the Season, David French took the final pass to score in the corner and finish an excellent move. Colfs came straight back with a score of their own as from a scrum they managed to secure the ball whilst going backwards allowing their number 8 to pick up and drive for the line before crossing for a half time score of 10 - 21. Medway restarted and when Colfs failed to deal with the high ball it was recovered well and Medway were back on the attack. A number of phases saw them make their way into the twenty-two before the ball was sent out wide right where French again took the final pass to touch down only for the try to be disallowed as he had stepped on the touch line just before scoring. Colfs took a quick twenty-two drop out which was run straight back at them with quick ball going back to the right where prop Richard Petch had been waiting (he says) for just such an eventually. He took the final pass and crashed over for a 10 - 28 lead. Medway went further ahead five minutes later in almost exactly the same fashion as the numbers out right were exploited by the backs allowing flanker Dan O'Brien to score and with Ford again hitting the target with a great kick from the touchline Colfs found themselves restarting 10 - 35 down. To their credit they continued to play with commitment and were rewarded for their efforts with the final score of the game as Medway tried one move too many losing possession and allowing the Colfs centre to strip the ball and run in a try under the posts for a final score of 10 - 35.

This was yet another good performance from the Extra's who had just a bit too much pace and mobility for a Colfs team that worked really hard, never gave up and contributed hugely to a game played in an excellent spirit. We look forward to meeting them again next season. Thanks also to referee Mr Williams who had a good game. He reffed calmly and with assurance and allowed the lads to play which contributed to an open game. And so the 2017/18 programme comes to an end and the lads are to be congratulated on what has been another successful season overall. A total of 56 players have represented the Extra's this season and to everyone single one of them the coaching and management team of James Pearce and Steve Brightman say a huge thank you. We have managed to combine experience with an infusion of youngsters which has produced some good quality rugby and helped to swell training numbers which has been vital to the teams development. Next season promises to be more challenging with 2nd teams of the calibre of Canterbury, TJ's and Westcombe Park looking to rejoin the Invicta league. We will need to be at our very best to compete but on the evidence of this season we definitely have the potential. We would like to say thank you to all of the people at Medway that do what they do to support us both on and off the pitch - Mel and Gordon on the tractor, Liz on shirts, the catering team and of course the bar staff. Finally the biggest thank you has to go to all of the loyal supporters that have followed us around this season through good weather and bad. Your support and encouragement has been really appreciated and we look forward to having you with us again next season.

Medway Squad: Richard Petch, Andy Connell, Al Waterman, Dan Goodall, Rhys Gue, Dan O'Brien, Oscar Wells, David French, Rob O'Brien, Brad Ford, Conor Chalmers, Lewis Hollidge, Henry Hall, Matt Brightman, Zach Garratt, Bobby Ellis, Johnny Smith, Toby Gerdes-Hansen