

## Tonbridge Juddians 10 Medway Extra 35 - 13th January 2018

When these two met earlier in the season the deciding factor was Brad Ford's boot - not this time as Medway ran in four decent tries and defended well to secure another important win.

Medway began brightly and by putting some decent phases together slowly made their way into the TJ's twenty-two testing the defence. The first scrum of the game saw the Medway forwards exert some early pressure resulting in a penalty, an early Brad Ford kick and a 0 - 3 lead. This was doubled five minutes later with another successful penalty kick and the TJ's lads must have been thinking 'Here we go again'. They responded well however winning the restart and settling into their own patterns that saw them gain ground and put Medway under pressure. The defence looked as if it was going to hold but eventually quick ball out wide to the right saw a gap open up which the winger took scoring in the corner to bring the score to 5 - 6. Medway claimed their own restart and again began to build some pressure as forwards and backs worked well together to retain the ball and keep things moving at a decent pace until scrum half Bobby Ellis took the ball, saw some space in behind the defence and chipped the ball into it. The TJ's defensive line had to turn to deal with the threat but Ellis beat them to it hacking the ball on once more before falling on it for Medway's first try of the game. A successful Ford conversion extended the lead to 5 - 13. Medway again took the restart and made their way deep into TJ's territory until an offside penalty allowed them to clear their lines. They won the resulting line out and again went patiently through the phases until they once again managed to find space out on the right to put the winger in for another unconverted try and a score of 10 - 13. With ten minutes to go until half time Medway extended the lead when a concerted forwards effort saw them pick and go a number of times edging closer to the try line leaving Andy Connell to pick up and dive over for a half time score of 10 -20.

The second half was definitely Medway's as they began to take more control of line outs and scrums and began to play with more width making use of the pace in the back line. Their third try when it came was a great team effort with nearly everyone at some stage having the ball as they turned it over on their own five metre line and sent it through the hands at pace rather than just kick to touch. As they made their way upfield, forwards combined well with the backs, the passing was fast and accurate and the ball retention at the breakdown was excellent. Medway were working hard and TJ's were unable to stop them as they moved closer to the try line. They were finally put out of their misery as Alfie Orris picked up from a ruck on the five metre line and burst through the defence to finish what had been a very impressive spell of rugby. TJ's restarted 10- 27 down but it wasn't long before Medway regained possession and extended their lead to 10 -30 with another successful Ford penalty. TJ's worked hard but despite a brief period of possession and territory they were unable to break down Medway's well organised defence. The final try came from another TJ's penalty on their twenty-two which saw Medway take the scrum with quick ball out to the backs. Again the passing was accurate with the final one finding winger Matt Brightman who finished well in the corner despite the full backs best efforts to get him into touch. The final whistle went with the score at 10 -35 and for the second week running Medway had managed to stop their opponents scoring in the second half.

This was a much better all round performance from Medway who held their discipline, defended well and took their chances when they came. Everyone contributed with the bench making a real impact. Thanks to TJ's who worked hard and at times made life very difficult for the Extra's - we wish them well for the remainder of the season. A big thanks also to referee Mr Hollins who was consistent throughout and let the teams play rugby.

**Medway Squad:** Richard Petch, Tom Whitnell, Andy Connell, Tad Bileisis, Johnny Smith, Oscar Wells, Dave French, Toby Gerdes-Hansen, Bobby Ellis, Brad Ford, Alfie Orris, Sean Crittenden, Luke Burns, Matt Brightman, Rhys Burns, Ben Wellard, Doug Ebanks, Pete Ward, Luke Osborne