

Medway 49 Cobham 27 (London South 1) – 02nd December 2017

On Saturday, in front of a large crowd, Medway entertained Surrey side Cobham for the first time ever at Priestfields. The spectator numbers were boosted by over 80 past players who sat down for a pre-match reunion lunch. In fine playing conditions the game kicked off and Medway were soon on the front foot as the visitors conceded back to back penalties at the breakdown. An excellent catch and drive near the Cobham line saw Dan Huntley get the final touchdown to score the try. Dan Harvey kicked the conversion from out wide and it was the perfect start for the home side 7-0. That good start did not last long. After 10 minutes good handling from the visitors combined with a defensive lapse saw Cobham back on level terms with a well taken converted try. As the game progressed Medway were awarded kickable penalties and on 19 minutes Daniel Harvey was on target with the second to put Medway back in front 10-7. Both teams were looking to dominate the other but the game was turning into a real cut and thrust affair by both sides. Cobham were soon back on level terms with an excellent long range effort from 42 metres. On 38 minutes Medway were awarded a scrum on the visitors 10m line out to the right hand side. A fine strike move by the backs saw Sam Garofalo go over and Harvey converted to put Medway back in front 17-10. From the kick off, as was the nature of this game, Cobham hit back. The visitors regained possession following a Medway handling error. Their forwards winning good front foot ball released their backs and more good skills saw the visions fly half go under the posts for a well taken converted try leaving the half time score at 17-17.

The second half kicked off and an early Medway penalty was kicked deep into the Cobham 22m. However the line out ball was knocked on and Cobham were awarded a scrum on their own 5m line. A powerful drive from the Medway forwards saw Cobham driven back off their own ball and Jordan Stubbington touched down for Dan Harvey to kick the conversion and put Medway ahead 24-17. Harvey was on target with another penalty shortly afterwards to stretch the lead to 27-17. Medway were now starting to dominate but were undone by back to back errors which allowed a clinical Cobham side to score their third try which was converted and narrowed the gap to 27-24. The game was still in the balance, Cobham were making a real fight of the game despite Medway's forwards getting the upper hand. That forward dominance had to tell soon and so it was. A lineout catch and drive was initially defended but had narrowed Cobham's defence and the ball was fed wide for Alfie Orris to scamper over. Harvey converted and that put Medway 34-24. Sadly, Orris was forced to leave the field with a hamstring injury and will be out until next year.

Cobham were showing great resilience and in one of their attacks Henry Hall was sent to the sin bin having been adjudged to have made a no arms tackle. Cobham kicked the resultant penalty to come back again within a single score at 34-27. Medway were living dangerously, simple errors in possession were providing Cobham with opportunities which they were taking full advantage of. Ironically, a refereeing decision saw a Cobham player question the referee and Harvey was on target with the subsequent penalty to put the Medway lead back out to 10 points at 37-27 with just 10 minutes left. On 73 mins a good kick from Ben Dance saw Medway regain possession for Antony Clement to put Sam Sharpe away to score an excellent unconverted try in the corner. Just 6 minutes later Clement was again the architect of another Sharpe try when an excellent tackle was backed up with turning the ball over and that ball went through the hands for Sharp to finish. Harvey converted and Medway finally secured the victory at 49-27. This was a hard fought victory and Cobham deserve credit for the way in which they battled hard but the dominance of the Medway forwards eventually provided the platform and secured the victory.

Coach Taff Gwilliam said 'after losing our unbeaten record last week it was important to bounce back. We are very pleased with the victory over a very competitive Cobham side however we will need to reduce our error count if we are to realise our ambitions this season'.