

Medway 47 Charlton Park 0 (London South 1) – 23rd January 2016

Having suffered two consecutive defeats it was important for Medway to get back to winning ways against Charlton Park on Saturday. The south London club are having a difficult season and currently prop up the league. The weather and ground conditions were good for January and conducive for open, flowing rugby. Medway were able to include Matt Gardner and Jimmy Rutherford for the first time since November, who along with Alex O'Leary made up a very strong looking subs bench.

Charlton kicked off with Medway playing into the breeze and the visitors quickly got on the wrong side of the referee losing ground via three penalties. Medway took the scrum option from the third and the pack drove over for Number 8, Doug Ebanks to get the touchdown, which with a conversion from Dan Harvey, gave the home team the perfect start.

The remainder of the first half was unforgettable. Medway dominated territory and possession but squandered several excellent scoring opportunities. The home team's line out was mis-firing and every time they got into position, the ball was lost at the key moment. Charlton missed two long range penalty kicks and Medway one, and thus the score line remained 7 – 0 until the interval.

The second half was much better for the home team and they scored six tries at regular intervals. Immediately from the re-start Dan Harvey and Leo Liua'ana combined to feed Sammy Garofalo who beat several defenders to score under the posts. Minutes later, Medway put the result beyond doubt with their third try. A penalty was kicked to the corner and with an improving line out, the pack won the ball and drove over for Jimmy Rutherford to get the touchdown. Mid way through the half Medway secured the bonus point when the ref awarded them a penalty try. Straight from the re-start Charlton lost the ball in mid-field and quick passing released Bobby Ellis to roll back the years and sprint in from 40 metres. James Dance scored the sixth try showing good pace to beat the covering defence, and the seventh and last try came from another scrum push over, this time scored by Matt Gardner.

Dan Harvey had a good day, successful with six out of eight from the kicking tee. Dan Huntley was deservedly awarded man of the match for yet another excellent performance on the flank.

Overall, Medway did what they needed to do to overcome a side who are obviously struggling at the moment. Charlton never gave up and bravely fought to the very end. Medway's performance improved as the game progressed, their set piece got stronger and stronger and the confidence in open play grew.

Medway travel to face Chiswick next week away, kick-off 2pm.

Medway's team;

Petch, Sandison, Johnson, Easton, Weobley, Huntley, Fernyhough, Ebanks, Dance, Harvey, Garofalo, Burns, Liua'ana, Ellis, Wardzynski, Subs; Gardner, Rutherford, O'Leary (all used).