

Medway 30 Chiswick 21 (London South 1) – 10th October 2015

Chiswick visited Priesfields on Saturday for the first ever game between these two sides. Medway have enjoyed a slightly better start to the new season and occupied fifth position in the league, whereas their visitors were in ninth spot before the game.

The weather was bright and with firm ground underfoot, conditions were perfect for open flowing rugby. Medway, playing into the wind in the first half, started well but it was Chiswick who had the first opportunity to get on the score board when they missed a fairly straightforward penalty kick. From the drop out, Medway quickly moved down the pitch and were awarded a scrum close to the Chiswick line. The forwards went for the drive, and as Chiswick wheeled and broke up, the ref awarded the locals a penalty try, 7 – 0 after 8 minutes.

Medway extended their lead after 15 minutes when following good work by Luke Burns, Dan Harvey made an excellent break and he off-loaded to James Dance who outstripped the covering defence to score a good try. Chiswick missed another penalty kick after 21 minutes and then Ben Dance intercepted a loose Chiswick pass to race away and score Medway's third try after only 24 minutes and open up a commanding looking 21 – 0 lead.

At this point, it looked as though the game was over as a contest, but Chiswick had other ideas and began a remarkable comeback. Having butchered one great scoring opportunity, they scored a good team try when their lively number 7 broke through the home defence. Medway kicked a penalty just before half time to consolidate their lead at 24 – 7.

With the wind now in their favour, the expectation was for Medway to press on and score more tries during the second half. However, as the locals missed a few promising scoring opportunities, Chiswick counter attacked and scored their second try. A good conversion narrowed the gap to 24 – 14, and one thought the next score might be crucial. Chiswick now playing the better rugby of the two sides, put Medway under increasing pressure, and after 18 minutes their impressive number 7 broke through again to score his second try. The conversion narrowed the gap to only three points.

Medway rallied and quickly steadied the ship through two quick penalties from Dan Harvey, thus restoring a nine point lead. The game became stretched in the final ten minutes as both sides tried to score a fourth and bonus point try, but neither team were able to finish promising opportunities.

An entertaining contest between two evenly matched sides and Chiswick left Medway disappointed not to have got something out of the game. Medway on the other hand, were happy with the win, but concerned with the way they let a convincing lead slip away.

Medway's team;

Mataapa, Sandison, L Johnson, Easton, Rutherford, Huntley, B Dance, B Humphrey, J Dance, Harvey, Garofalo, Tila, Liua'ana, Burns, Wardzynski, Subs; O'Leary, Petch, Weobley (all used).