

Havant 27 Medway 26 (London South 1) - 19th December 2015

Havant scored a try in the final play of the game to snatch victory away from the visitors in a last, cruel twist, of an entertaining game played before a large, vociferous crowd. Prior to this, the game had ebbed and flowed, with both sides enjoying periods of supremacy. Havant had dominated the first quarter taking a 14 – 0 lead; Medway got back into the game in quarter two pulling back to trail by just 17 – 14 at half time; Medway dominated much of the second half but couldn't stop Havant scoring early, and then very late to just steal the game by the solitary point.

The visitors started the game in the worst possible fashion, after failing to deal with the kick-off, Havant seized the loose ball, went through several phases and scored a good converted try inside a minute. Havant went close to extending their lead on 18 minutes but did score two minutes later when the ref awarded a series of penalties against Medway and a quick tap and go released their left winger to extend the lead to 14 – 0.

Medway then began to get the long journey out of their system and attacked Havant. A loose kick out of defence was fed to Charlie Wardzynski who set off on a fantastic run to score a brilliant individual try under the posts, 14 – 7 and get Medway back into the game. Havant popped over a drop goal on the half hour mark but five minutes later Medway's sustained pressure was rewarded when Max Easton scored from close range. Harvey's conversion drew the sides close 17 – 14 at the interval.

Six minutes into the second half the ref harshly awarded a penalty for Medway wheeling a scrum that had gone possibly 15 degrees off true. The kick to the corner set up field position for Havant and after being initially denied, they managed to drive their way over for an unconverted try. To make matters worse and despite Havant's advantage, the ref sent Medway's hooker to the bin for 10 minutes. The visitor's response was excellent, and the fourteen men went immediately on the attack and put the home side under concerted pressure.

On the 20 minute mark Bobby Ellis cut a good line and drove over the line but failed to ground the ball. From the resultant scrum Doug Ebanks looked to have scored a try but the ref was initially unsighted and then adjudged held up. Bobby went close again and was stopped just short but on his third attempt at scoring was successful and pulled Medway back to 22 – 19. Straight from the kick off Conor Chalmers did well to gather Harvey's long clearance kick. Excellent hands by Garofalo released Beaumont who slid in for Medway's fourth try in the corner. Harvey's good conversion gave Medway a 26 – 22 lead with 9 minutes remaining.

Back came Havant into the game, Wardzynski made two try saving tackles and the home side squandered one golden scoring opportunity. With two minutes remaining the ref awarded another penalty to Havant and they kicked to the corner. Their first drive was repelled but the ref sent Medway's Tom Beaumont to the bin. Another penalty and drive by Havant was stopped and this time Sammy G was sent to the bin. At the third time of asking the home side managed to squeeze over in the corner to steal the game with an unconverted try.

Medway left Hook's Lane feeling very disappointed having fought hard to get back into the game only to lose it at the death. There were some positives to come out of the game; Wardzynski is fulfilling his potential at full back and is in fine form; Joe Fernyhough came off the bench and showed what a good prospect he is for the future; stand-in centres Ellis and Burns did well playing out of position and on another day Ellis could have bagged a hat trick.

The guys now get a well-deserved break and their next game is at home on the 9th January when Medway face Chobham, kick off 1400.

Medway's team;

Petch, Sandison, Johnson, Easton, Weobley, Huntley, Beaumont, Ebanks, Garofalo, Harvey, Chalmers, Burns, Ellis, Catlin, Wardzynski, Subs; Cooley, Fernyhough (both used).