

## Medway (Extra Dev) 36 Leigh (I) 10 - 28th November 2015

Medway's Development Squad Extra's welcomed Leigh to a blustery Priestfield keen to avenge their heavy defeat in the reverse fixture earlier in the season. The make-up of both sides has changed during the course of the season but as always Leigh were well organised, committed and hard to break down.

Medway kicked off but Leigh cleared well making use of the strong wind at their backs to immediately gain a foothold in the Medway half from where their forwards slowly gained ground by picking and going from the rucks. When Medway were caught offside just outside their twenty-two Leigh elected to go for goal and secured a 0 – 3 lead. Leigh failed to deal with the restart knocking the ball on and the first scrum of the day saw both packs well matched. Medway secured possession and quick ball saw the backs get into the game as the ball went first out to the left wing and then all the way across the back line to the right where Matt Callow showed good pace to outstep the Leigh full back and score the first of his three tries. Leigh restarted 5 – 3 down and immediately began to build pressure in Medway territory but the defence held well and a couple of penalties against Leigh saw Medway finally get the ball into touch just outside their twenty-two. They promptly lost the lineout giving possession back to Leigh who now looked to get their backs moving but a knock-on saw Medway recover the ball and react quickly sending it back the other way where winger Ben Edgar took it on the half way line and set off at pace. His run was pretty to watch as deft footwork saw him beat four Leigh defenders before finally touching down under the posts for an excellent individual try. Shepherd secured the extras and Medway extended their lead to 12 – 3. Medway now looked to increase the tempo but some wayward kicking allowed Leigh to relieve any pressure that they were under with some long clearances which sent Medway back into their half. With the strong wind making life difficult for the hookers, the lineout was not going according to plan for either side and the next try came when Bear Stapleton stole the ball on a Leigh throw and made good ground before being tackled. Leigh tried to hold him up but he worked hard and got to the floor setting up a ruck from which the ball was given to prop Tony Cohen who smashed his way towards the line looking set to score until the ball was dislodged in contact and Leigh were awarded the scrum. Their relief was short-lived however as the ball came out on their side and rolled loose with scrum-half Matt Munday reacting first to pick it up and dive over for a real poachers try. Shepherd again added the conversion and Medway ended the half leading 19 – 3.

With the wind now at their backs Coach Jenkins instructions were quite clear – keep your heads, use the wind, kick to the corners and don't let them back in to the game. As is often the case however, the lads, having agreed to this sensible course of action, then did the complete opposite for the first ten minutes giving away a succession of needless penalties which allowed Leigh to gain valuable ground. Another penalty ten metres out saw Leigh take it quickly and get the ball to their very influential No.8 who smashed through a disorganised Medway defence to narrow the gap to 19 – 10. This seemed to wake Medway up as they immediately replied with another try as Leigh took the restart, the Medway forwards turned it over and the backs got the ball moving quickly to Callow who ran in for a 24 – 10 lead. Medway now settled down and played some good rugby keeping the pressure on Leigh and it was they who were now conceding the penalties allowing Medway to camp inside their twenty-two as they took the scrum option each time. Medway finally took a quick tap and go on the five metre line releasing Matt Wadhams to crash through extending Medway's lead to 31 – 10. With ten minutes left Medway secured the win as yet more penalties and successful scrummaging saw the ball sent quickly along the back line where Callow ran in his hat trick try thus ensuring free beer for his team mates and a final score of 36 – 10.

Both teams contributed to a good game played in difficult conditions and credit goes to all of the players for playing it in the right spirit. It was a pleasure to host Leigh again who are always tough opponents and yet again they gave it everything as could be seen by the players that suffered injuries – we wish them all a speedy recovery and the team every success for the remainder of the season.

So another good win for the Extras who played some good rugby both in attack and defence in difficult conditions. This was a team performance with everyone contributing – well done lads.

SB

**Squad:** Tony Cohen, Dan Moffatt, Greg Woodward, PG Smith, Ryan Carroll, Lewis Marriott, Ted Grant, Glen Stapleton, Matt Munday, Mark Shepherd, Viktor Kopylov, Tom Bourne, Matt Callow, Ben Edgar, Stan Orris, Jack Nickalls, Matt Wadhams, Jamie Settle

**Tries:** Callow (3), Edgar, Munday, Wadhams