

Deal and Betteshanger 12 Medway 44 (London South East 2)

17th September 2016

Medway travelled to face Deal and Betteshanger at the Drill Field on Saturday in dry, overcast skies and with a gentle cross wind blowing. The visitors led 23 – 7 at half time and went on to secure the four try bonus point mid-way through the second half. Fly half Dan Harvey had a perfect day from the kicking tee converting eight from eight attempts on goal and Medway's pack enjoyed scrum dominance that resulted in two penalty tries.

Medway started the game well and immediately went on the attack. An early try scoring opportunity went begging as possession was lost on the home try line. However, after 10 minutes Medway strung multiple phases together and patient approach play stretched the home defence allowing Henry Hall to break through, racing around under the posts for the first converted try.

Deal and Betteshanger got back into the game after 18 minutes when a mid-field clearance kick from Medway was gathered and some indifferent cover tackling allowed the home team backs to run in for a well taken try. The good conversion levelled the scores 7 - 7.

The next 20 minutes were going to be key to the outcome of the game but it was Medway who pulled away through three excellent penalties from Harvey and then a penalty try from the pack on the stroke of half time to establish a commanding 23 – 7 lead. The home team kept Medway at bay for most of the third quarter as multiple injury breaks punctuated play and prevented either side from gaining fluency or rhythm. On 17 minutes, the home team had a second row sent to the bin for 10 minutes and Medway exploited the numerical advantage winning a second penalty try as they drove the home pack back over their line.

The game became a little feisty and both teams had a player binned for hand bags. Deal enjoyed their best period of the game with concerted pressure on the Medway line and on 24 minutes crashed over for an unconverted try, 30 – 12.

Stung into action, still needing to secure the bonus point try, Medway kicked a penalty into the corner and a well worked catch and drive allowed Billy Humphrey to get the important touch down. The visitors then scored a fifth try shortly before the end of the game when skipper James Dance made a 50 yard break from his own half, the recycled ball was fed to Dan Harvey who spotted a mis-match and outstripped the covering defence to run around under the posts and complete a fine individual performance. Final score 44 – 12.

Medway's front row of Matappa, Sandison, O'Leary and Petch were dominant providing a constant supply of quality possession all afternoon. Stubbington and Fernyhough secured good line out ball at key times, and the back row of Beaumont, Humphrey and Huntley matched the physical challenge of the home team. The backs tackled well and stretched the home team in attack.

Overall, a good team performance against a physical Deal and Betteshanger side who always represent a significant challenge on their own patch.

Next week Medway face Hove RFC at home.

Medway's team;

Matappa, W Sandison, O'Leary, Stubbington, Fernyhough, Beaumont, Huntley, Humphrey, J Dance, Harvey, Burns, Hall, Walsh, Chalmers, Wardzynski, Sub; Petch, T Sandison, Orris