

Horsham 12 Medway 53 (London South East 2) 14th January 2017

Following last week's good win at Hove, the same eighteen Medway players made another journey down the M23, this time to face Horsham. The recent snowy and freezing conditions had put the game in doubt, but the Horsham pitch was excellent and allowed a good game of free flowing rugby. Medway played well, they were clinical in their finishing and scored four tries in the first half and another four in the second. Horsham enjoyed good periods during the game and spent the whole of the third quarter camped in the Medway 22. However, whilst Medway's defence was generally good, Horsham struggled to cope with the pace and accuracy of Medway's attacks.

The game kicked off, Medway stole an early Horsham lineout only to knock on and stray off-side. Horsham's penalty kick hit the post. Medway quickly went on the attack and a beautiful free flowing backs' move allowed right winger Alfie Orris to touch down wide on the left. Harvey's excellent conversion gave Medway a 7 – 0 lead after only 6 minutes. The home side then had their best spell of the first half and although they missed another penalty, they did score a try from a line out drive, 7 – 5 to the visitors.

Medway's response to conceding was immediate. Horsham made a handling error from the kick off, Luke Burns gathered the loose ball and then it went down the line for Ben Dance to show good hands to put Orris in for his second try on 17 minutes. Shortly afterwards, Harvey extended the lead with a penalty and for the next ten minutes Medway battered the Horsham line without crossing the whitewash. Eventually the pressure told with two quick fire tries just before the interval and secured the game for the visitors. Initially, a good blind side break and excellent hands by Petch and Huntley allowed Stubbington to run around to touch down under the posts. Shortly afterwards, and on the stroke of half time, Stubbington won a line out and another fine backs' move allowed Orris to show power and pace to cut through the middle and score his hat-trick try plus secure the bonus point for Medway. 27 – 5 to Medway at the interval.

Horsham started the second half brightly and immediately pinned Medway back in their 22. Despite sustained pressure and Medway playing with 14 men, they struggled to break down the visitors determined defence. Medway missed a few opportunities to escape and eventually Horsham did cross the line and score their second try. As often happens, this was a turning point and suddenly Medway started to play again. Richard Petch, who was having a fine game, fielded a loose Horsham kick and following a good drive by Burns, Charlie Wardzynski squeezed over in the corner for a try. Horsham visibly tired in the last quarter and Medway ran in a further three tries scored by Luke Burns, Dan Harvey and Ben Dance.

So, a good performance from the whole team. The forwards put the Horsham set piece under pressure for the whole game and won a plentiful supply of ball for the backs. Stubbington had a bright game and man of the match went to flanker Tom Beaumont. The backs ran in some great tries, Orris showed excellent finishing and thoroughly deserved his three tries. Fly half Dan Harvey had his best game for some time and mixed up his running and passing game very well.

Medway now have a week off, before facing Crowborough at Priestfields on Saturday 28th January

Medway's team;

Petch, Humphrey, O'Leary, Easton, Stubbington, Beaumont, B Dance, Huntley, J Dance, Harvey, Burns, Hall, Walsh, Orris, Wardzynski, Subs; Clement, Sandison, Cooley (all used)