

Hove 5 Medway 41 (London South East 2) – 07th January 2017

After a three week break for Christmas and New Year, Medway returned to league action with a potentially difficult away game at Hove on Saturday. Hove had won four of their past five games, including taking some notable scalps, and were known to have a dangerous set of running backs. As it turned out, Medway won convincingly but the game was tough, and Hove stretched the visitors defence to the limit on several occasions.

True to form, Hove tried to run the ball from their own 22 early in the game but a handling error gifted possession to Medway. Henry Hall gathered, and then did well to off-load to Luke Burns who touched down under the posts to give Medway a 7 – 0 lead after only four minutes.

Medway's bright start continued and they kept Hove under pressure resulting in a string of home infringements. Hove suffered a first yellow card after 12 minutes and Harvey kicked the penalty to extend Medway's lead to 10 – 0. Soon afterwards, Hove were reduced to 13 men when a deliberate knock on denied Medway a try. The visitors kicked the penalty to the corner and following the ensuing lineout the Dance brothers combined well to allow Ben to crash over for a try. Harvey's conversion pushed the lead to 17 – 0 after 21 minutes.

During the next quarter Hove came back into the game and enjoyed their best period of the game. Medway were lucky to avoid conceding after 25 minutes but 4 minutes later, after Medway failed to exit again, the home side did score when their impressive full back galloped through the Medway defence to score wide on the left.

Having suffered a bit of a wobble, Medway put the game to bed with tries either side of the half time break. In the last play of the first half, a good scrum drive was thwarted but Ben Dance managed to pick up and work his way over the line. Soon after the second half restart, full-back Charlie Wardzynski cut loose and sliced through the home defence. He was tackled just short but the ball was quickly recycled and fed to Billy Humphrey to score under the Hove posts; 29 – 5 to Medway after five minutes of the second half and try bonus secured.

Medway further extended their lead after 10 minutes when Ben Dance made a good break from the back of a scrum inside his own half, he fed Alfie Orris who did very well to beat two covering defenders and race away to score under the posts. Mid-way through the second half Medway pushed their lead out to 41 – 5 when another scrum drive gave Billy Humphrey his second touch-down of the afternoon. Hove ran the ball at every opportunity in the final 20 minutes but excellent covering tackling from Medway prevented them from breaking through.

Overall, a good result and performance from Medway who started 2017 with a fine win on the road. Coaches Gwilliam and Longstaff were pleased but did comment that there were still some key areas to work on in training over the coming weeks.

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)