

## Medway 25 Old Colfeians 10 (London SE2) - 18th February 2017

First versus second in the league, perfect weather for open rugby, large crowd supporting both teams; the biggest game of the season so far at Priestfields. Medway had narrowly edged the reverse fixture at Horn Park back in October last year, snatching victory from their hosts in the dying seconds of the game. Old Colfeians would undoubtedly be highly motivated to gain revenge and maintain their push for promotion.

The visitors kicked off playing with the gentle breeze on their backs and immediately pinned Medway back with controlled phased play, retaining possession of the ball. Medway initially defended well, but then conceded a penalty presenting Old Colfe's with a simple kick giving them a 3 – 0 lead after only two minutes.

The next twenty minutes saw an arm wrestle for supremacy. Old Colfe's were edging the forward battle, but when Medway had the ball, they were more fluid and played with greater pace and width. Medway missed a difficult penalty after 7 minutes, but levelled the scores on the quarter hour mark with a simple kick from Harvey when the Old Colfe's pack stood up in the scrum.

Medway went very close to scoring after 23 minutes but did score a great opening try after 30 minutes. Medway put into their own scrum deep inside their own half. Ben Dance broke from the base of the scrum and a fine flowing move involving Orris, Beaumont and James Dance set up a ruck 2 metres short of the try line. Antony Clement was on hand to fire the ball out to Humphrey who crashed over under the posts to give Medway a 10 – 3 lead.

No further scores in the remainder of the first half. Medway were just about deserving of their lead, having created more scoring opportunities than Old boys who had not really gone close in the opening forty minutes.

Now playing with the slight breeze, Medway started the second half brightly knowing that the next score would be crucial and probably decide the outcome of the game. A good blind side break, after 5 minutes saw Wardzynski release Billy Humphrey to touch down, but play was pulled back as he was adjudged to have put a foot into touch. Not to be denied, two minutes later Medway won a line out and built pressure through good phased play. From a ruck close to the Old Boys line, James Dance hit Antony Clement running a perfect line, to ghost through the visitors defence and touch down under the posts. The extras gave Medway a healthy looking 17 – 3 lead.

Medway's tempo and discipline waivered slightly allowing Old Colfe's possession through silly penalties. The visitors went "route one" and used their large forwards and pick and go's to attack. Medway's defence initially seemed up to the task, but the visitors did manage to squeeze over for a converted try after 17 minutes and give themselves the chance of a comeback. 17 – 10 to Medway.

Harvey settled the home team nerves with a good penalty after 23 minutes from another scrum penalty to push their lead out to 20 – 10. The final 15 minutes saw Medway mostly dominate territory and go close to extending their lead on several occasions. Several good line breaks and scoring opportunities went begging as the final pass was either forward or wayward.

The home side did however finish with another try. A fine flowing move set up a close range line out. The forwards executed a perfect catch and drive allowing Ross Cooley to touch down. Final score 25 – 10.

So, Medway remain unbeaten after 17 league games and maintain their impressive push for promotion. The team and coaches were clearly pleased with the victory over a good Old Colfeians side, but knew they didn't quite play to their full potential nor hit their flowing best during this tough game.

Man of the match was awarded to youngster and second row, Jordan Stubbington for Medway.

### **Medway's team;**

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