

Medway 56 Old Tottonians 7 (London 1 South) - 7th October 2017

Both teams came in to this match with their squads depleted by injuries but nonetheless looking to maintain their respective good starts to the season. It was a breezy but dry day with Medway playing into the elements in the first half. The game started at a fast pace with both teams looking to impose themselves on the other but it was Medway who scored first following some good continuity play with Gardner, Beaumont and Cooley prominent. The visitors were penalised at the breakdown and Dan Harvey kicked the penalty 3-0.

Tottonians soon came back, a needless turnover deep in the visitors half saw them break tackles in midfield and good support play rewarded them with a score under the posts for a converted try. 3-7 As the half progressed Medway were controlling the ball well and came close to scoring but the Tottonians defence held firm. However on 16 minutes Medway's slick handling saw Henry Hall finish off a great try in the corner to take the lead 8-7.

The match continued to be keenly fought especially at the breakdown, Huntley, Gardner, Stubbington and Beaumont were a real thorn to the opposition. It was not until the 31st minute that the next score came. Medway secured good line out ball from Easton and attacked the visitors midfield, excellent ball retention and quick play saw Alfie Orris over in the right corner for an excellent team try. Harvey missed the difficult conversion leaving the score at 13-7.

Immediately from the kick off Max Easton secured possession and fed Mike Gardner whose excellent carry had the visitors defence retreating, he then fed Ben Dance who broke their line and moved the ball wide for Henry Hall to put Alfie Orris in for his second try and an 18-7 lead.

Medway were now playing with their tails up especially given it was into the strong breeze. The visitors having started brightly were now on the back foot and struggling to contain the home side. Tottonians kicked off and Ben Dance instigated another Medway attack which saw them thwarted just short of the Tottonians line. The subsequent scrum and exit for Tottonians saw them concede a penalty which Harvey kicked to make the half time score 21-7.

With the elements in Medway's favour Tottonians faced a struggle to stay in the game and so it proved when with the half only 2 minutes old Medway secured their try bonus point. A good break from Sam Sharpe, playing only his second game, saw the ball re-cycled wide by James Dance and Dan Harvey for Bill Sandison to drive over in the corner. 26-7.

On 46 minutes with Medway dominating field position Sharpe was high tackled in midfield in front of the posts and Harvey was on target to put the home side ahead 29-7. 3 minutes later Harvey was again on target as the visitors infringed and were now down 32-7.

Medway secured the ball from the kick off and with Dan Huntley carrying strongly supported by debutant Josh Hawkins Tottonians were penalised again. So many penalties within a short space of time saw the visitors reduced to 14 men with their fullback yellow carded. The penalty was kicked to the corner Sandison was accurate as ever with the throw. Tottonians defended the initial drive but their fringe defence was exposed and James Dance capitalised to score a sharp try. Harvey converted from out wide to make the score 39-7.

With the visitors down to 14 men and playing into the conditions Medway were dominating. Tom Whitnell came on to provide youthful fresh impetus in the front row. A solid scrum on 58 minutes saw another youngster Jordan Stubbington score a well taken try. Harvey added the extras 46-7. The visitors were then restored to their full compliment and Medway added the experienced Billy Humphrey to the fray. Several times Tottonians worked hard to break out but sound defence from the home side including, another debutant, Ben Wellard kept the visitors at bay.

The final score of the game came off the back of a quickly taken penalty by James Dance, good interplay from Tom Beaumont and Ben Dance saw Beaumont score the try which was converted by Harvey to make the final score 56-7.

Coach Taff Gwilliam said 'This is a superb victory against a quality club who never gave up'.....'our recent injuries have tested the depth of the squad and the youngsters who have come in have fronted up brilliantly'.