

Brighton 12 Medway 31 (London South 1) - 04th November 2017

Medway travelled to Brighton on Saturday looking to extend their fine opening to the season. Matches between these two sides have always been closely fought affairs and this game was no different. Brighton started well dominating possession and territory but a midfield handing error deep in the Medway half saw Alfie Orris recover the ball and sprint away to score a well taken opportunist try. Dan Harvey converted. Soon after Harvey had the chance to extend the lead but the long range attempt drifted just wide of the post.

Medway were now getting into the game after the long coach journey and attacked Brighton in their 22m. An error at the breakdown saw Brighton awarded a scrum. At the scrum Brighton were adjudged to have wheeled illegally and the resultant penalty was taken quickly by James Dance who was supported by Jordan Stubbington whose pass found Max Easton for the lock to score under the posts. Harvey converted and Medway led 14-0 in as many minutes. Brighton were stung and the Blues always looked to attack with their back 3 particularly dangerous. Brighton exerted pressure on Medway and were rewarded with a penalty which they kicked into the corner and were successful with their catch and drive to score an unconverted try, 14-5 to the visitors. Brighton continued to pressure Medway as uncharacteristic errors in the Medway kicking game allowed Brighton to keep the pressure up. Only excellent defence out wide with Hall and Ben Dance prominent initially then a great steal under the posts with Mike Gardner leading the way stopped Brighton from adding to the score before half time.

The second half started as the first ended with Brighton on the front foot and they finally got their reward from a quickly taken penalty as their inside centre crashed over under the posts for a fine individual try which was duly converted to narrow the score to 14-12. Medway endeavoured to bounce back and looked to monopolise possession, good phases saw them win a penalty 35 yards out when a Brighton tackler failed to release. However the Harvey penalty missed the upright. In the 52 minute James Dance recovered a loose ball at a Brighton line out. Strong carries from the influential Dan Huntley and Mike Gardner saw James Dance and Dan Harvey combine to put Henry Hall away out wide. Harvey converted the try and Medway led 21-12. Straight from the re-start Medway cleared their lines early and as Brighton tried to counter attack Tom Beaumont intercepted a loose pass on the home 10m line and reached away to score under the posts thus securing the try bonus point. Harvey converted and Medway were now 28-12 ahead.

Brighton despite being well behind never gave up and pressed the Medway line for prolonged periods but a good team defensive effort kept the home side at bay. That defensive effort was particularly evident in the last 10 minutes when Medway were reduced to 14 men with Hall somewhat harshly adjudged to have used no arms in a strong tackle. Despite being down to 14 men as the game entered the final minutes Medway retained and controlled possession well and were rewarded with a kickable penalty. Harvey converted the chance to move the score out to 31-12 for a good away win against a talented Brighton side.