

Cobham 41 Medway 24 (London 1 South) - 07th April 2018

Medway travelled to Cobham on Saturday to take on their Surrey rivals having been forced to make personnel and positional changes due injury and unavailability following excellent back to back victories over Chichester and Brighton. Cobham for their part also had some changes to their first choice line up. Playing conditions for the match were excellent and the game kicked off with Medway gaining early possession. As Medway looked to attack from deep a loose pass was intercepted and the Cobham scored under the posts to lead 7-0.

Medway recovered and following a series of penalties for scrum infringements on the home side's line eventually drove over for stand in No 8 Ben Dance to score the unconverted try. On 15 minutes Medway steal a Cobham line out but the loose ball is re-gathered by the home side and an excellent cross kick sees their winger catch and score in the corner for an unconverted try and their lead went out to 12-5. Medway despite being down were very much in the game and continually attacked Cobham. Cobham defended well but in conceding a number of penalties had a player sent to the sin bin. Despite this Medway could not capitalise. They then themselves were reduced to 14 men with Jordan Stubbington harshly shown a yellow card for what seemed a fair strong tackle.

On the half hour mark Medway were on the attack near the home line when they lost possession. The loose ball fell kindly for the home player who raced the length of the field only to be stopped short by a great chase by Conor Chalmers however the Cobham 7 supported well and was on hand to take the offload and score the unconverted try. 17-5. Medway came back again and pressed but once again an interception from the home side prevented what seemed an inevitable try. The young Medway side continued to take the game to Cobham and eventually some great flowing rugby saw Sam Garofalo score on the stroke of half time after good hands from Antony Clement and Luke Burns making the score 17-10.

As in the first half Medway had a disastrous start to the second when a defensive high kick from Cobham was not dealt with and the loose ball fell kindly to Cobham hands and the player raced away to score a converted try and stretch the home lead to 24-10. It took only 3 minutes for Medway to reply. A break by Doug Ebanks, on for the injured Clement, saw him off load to Garofalo who finished well under posts. Alfie Orris kicked the conversion and Medway closed the gap to 24-17. Medway continued to take the game to the home side but just as it seemed they could get on level terms they threw yet another pass that was intercepted and Cobham took the full 7 points with the difficult conversion being successful. 31-17. Cobham deserved this victory not so much for their attacking play but for the resolute defence they offered when Medway attacked. Several times Medway went through long periods of possession pressing the home line but were denied by the disciplined defence.

Medway did manage to breach Cobham's line once more when strong running from Luke Burns saw him crash over. Orris Medway's stand in 10 for the day added the conversion to secure what could be a valuable bonus point come the end of the season. 31-24. Medway's hopes of securing more than the losing point disappeared when they failed to clear their lines of the resultant kick allowing Cobham a catch and drive lineout opportunity. They took the chance to push the score out to 36-24. Soon after Medway were once again reduced to 14 men when Tom Beaumont was sent to the sin bin for questioning a refereeing decision. Medway despite being down to 14 men still looked to take the game to Cobham looking for the second bonus point but once again gifted the home side possession who raced away to seal victory by 41-24. Medway were beaten on the day but although their own errors gifted Cobham 28 points Cobham deserved to win for their excellent defence Medway will need to re-gather themselves as next week they face local rivals Maidstone in the penultimate game of the league season. Coach Taff Gwilliam said " we were the architects of our own downfall with so many interceptions thrown"....."Cobham however were deserving of the victory with clinical finishing off our errors and even more so for their resolute defence". He added " We still have a lot to play for and the squad will be strengthened next week with returning players so competition for places at training will be good and we look forward to entertaining Maidstone in a key local derby".