

Dartfordians II 10 Medway Extra 31 (Invicta 1) - 17th November 2018

The Extra's made the short trip to Dartfordians keen to get back in to action after the break week. They started brightly enough enjoying most of the early possession and territory but without really dominating and, with ball retention not being at it's best, they couldn't put the points on the board that their line breaks deserved. It was therefore slightly against the run of play when a Darts clearing kick bounced kindly for their chasing backs allowing the centre to hack it through, pick up and score under the posts. Medway restarted 7-0 down and drew level 5 minutes later when they took a scrum from a penalty on the Darts twenty-two. Quick ball from it to fly half James Bullock saw him spot a large gap in the Darts defence which he exploited to the full, running through to score under the posts. Darts came back but with a much improved defence in terms of organisation and line speed, Medway held fast, counter attacking well and always looking dangerous when they retained the ball. However neither side could add to the score and so it remained 7-7 at half time.

Medway started the second half in determined fashion and spent the first 10 minutes in the Darts twenty two looking to add to their lead. When the score did come it was certainly different as a Medway penalty kick for goal fell short and wide, a Darts forward picked the ball up and tried to run it out but he was brought to the ground on the 5 metre line by the Medway chasers. Everybody set up at the ruck in readiness for Darts possession but somehow the ball appeared on the Medway side at the feet of flanker Dan O'Brien who, despite being as surprised as everyone else, reacted quickly, picked it up and almost sauntered through the gap at the side of the ruck to score with everyone looking at him wondering what he was doing. Darts narrowed the gap shortly after with a penalty to make it 10-12 but these were their only points of the half as Medway began to play with more pace and precision. They increased their lead when a Darts clearance kick failed to find touch allowing Medway to go through 4 phases before sending the ball out to the left where Tom Sandison as the stand in winger took the ball high above his head and held on as he charged over the line. A Stan Orris conversion gave them a 10-19 lead which they extended with Orris once again being instrumental as he picked up a loose ball, kicked it through, beat the Darts defender to it and fell on it for the try. His successful conversion made the score 10-26 but Medway weren't finished yet. They secured the restart and with good controlled possession made their way upfield again before full back Rhys Burns was set free wide 5 yards out to score their fifth try and finish with a 10-31 win.

This was a solid performance from the Extras who finally carried the excellent work at training into the game on Saturday. Our thanks go to Dartfordians who as always proved to be very tough opponents and were excellent hosts. Thanks also to referee Mr Franks who kept up with a fast paced game and was consistent with his decision making. It was also nice to see referees coach Mr Evans on the touchline whose cheerfulness, knowledge and ability to engage with supporters is always welcome.

Medway Squad: Darren Jalink, Gary Beck, Jack Nickalls, Johnny Smith, Tom Huntley, Malcolm Cameron, Dan O'Brien, Tom Sandison, Rob O'Brien, James Bullock, Matt Brightman, Sam Sharpe, Sean Crittenden, Stan Orris, Rhys Burns, Tad Bieisis, Rhys Gue, Zeki Yesilmen