

Tunbridge Wells 4th, 43, Maidstone 4th, 31 Saturday 6th October 2012

When Maidstone won a quick turnover from the kick off to see Dominic Baxter open the game with a try right under the posts just 30 seconds in, the crowd knew they were in for an exciting game of rugby and this one certainly didn't disappoint.

With a try in hand so soon into the game it was unfortunate for us to give away possession and allow the Tunbridge Wells halfbacks to control the majority of the first half of the game. Their strategy was rather straight forward but their execution was such that he was able to spread our defense thin and give their large inside centre the space he required to make some big holes through our lines.

The big guy made a lot of ground but on occasion he found himself without support which saw some counter breaks from our back three, most impressively perhaps was Tom Sheldon who made a half pitch run skipping through a number of missed tackles before taking a big hit that saw him leave the pitch.

We went two tries down in the first half and it took the introduction of 5th team regular Ben Hughes debuting for the 4th team at 2nd row to grant us the stability required to win some scrummaging possession and get back into the game with a try from Mike Blacker.

The second half saw skipper Richard Ewence take up residency on the bench, followed shortly by Olly Coomber who received a nasty neck injury on the front row. With the loss of Coomber we were down to 14 men for a long spell in the 2nd half but with thanks to some brutal running lines from Blacker, Jamal and Mike the flanker, we outperformed the home side, Scott Andrews making his mark by scoring a well deserved try, being shunted off the pitch through the flag and being stopped hard just shy of the line.

Blacker finished the game with a second try to his name which bought the game level, but in the closing minutes Tunbridge Wells scored two tries in succession sealing them the victory and denying us of a losing bonus point.

It was a well matched game, it highlights a weakness in our defensive play but also demonstrates our ability to spread the ball wide and fast and punch some big holes in an experienced defense.

Points awarded to:

Scott Andrews 5

Dominic Baxter 7

Mike Blacker 10

Tom McMulkin 9 - *a try and two conversions?*