



## Match Report

Invicta League

Mustangs XV 11 v Sidcup RFC 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 16

Played at The Mote, Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2013

Maidstone's Mustangs XV fell victim to their own over eagerness and a lack of composure at times, in a match that was there for the taking. Ultimately, it was unforced errors at key points and possibly a couple of unlucky referee decisions that cost them a positive result.

Visiting Sidcup were first on the score sheet when a Mustangs infringement delivered them a penalty opportunity which they duly converted. The response from the Mustangs was immediate as from the restart they were able to drive the play upfield with Sidcup infringing this time and Brad Ford taking the opportunity to level the scores.

The Mustangs continued to attack and good continuity saw them apply pressure on the Sidcup 5m, with the referee playing the advantage for a Sidcup infringement Maidstone looked to exploit an overlap on the flank before an offside Sidcup deliberately knocked on the break up the move. Whilst Ford took advantage of the resultant penalty, it was difficult to understand how the referee had kept the yellow card in his pocket for a blatantly cynical offence.

With half time approaching Maidstone found themselves defending, when deep in stoppage time Sidcup eventually crossed, but with several Mustangs players holding the Sidcup player off the floor it was difficult to see how the referee had awarded the try, which the Sidcup kicker duly converted to give the visitors a 6-10 lead at the interval.

The second half saw a much more open game as both sides pushed for scores, Sidcup capitalised on two penalty infringement in kickable positions by the home side to extend their lead to 10 points. The Mustangs began to increase the pressure and a series of plays to exploit the blind side channel with Mark Cashmore getting the score, in fading light the conversion attempt by Ford just drifted wide of the posts.

The closing stages saw Sidcup forced onto the back foot deep in their own territory but their defence held firm as they ran out narrow victors 11-16.

In a game that was ultimately very winnable, Maidstone's Mustangs can look back on some basic errors that cost them dearly; plus a couple of referee decisions that on another day may have fallen in their favour, but that's rugby.