

Match Report

Maidstone 28 v Bromley 6

by Trevor Langley

League, London 3 SE

Home at The Mote, Saturday 14 April, 2012 Kick Off – 3.00 pm

After such a high-profile game last week, there was concern that motivation, for a routine league fixture, would prove elusive for Maidstone. But with the return of three of the three-quarters, who would have been considered first choices last week, had they been available, this eventually turned into a routine 28-6 victory, even if true superiority was only demonstrated in the last quarter of the match.

Neil Graves scored a hat-trick of tries, emphasising just how vital he is going forward, and Ollie Rogers organised things from the back, for Maidstone to deny Bromley even a sniff of a try. With Sam Ellis looking bright in the fly-half slot, Maidstone's reorganised back line posed a number of questions, especially in the second half.



With Ben Wilson back at openside, after a long-term injury, and Alex Hadi stepping up from the Mustangs, on the blind-side, the pack also has a rejigged look about it. But they had too much for the Bromley eight, who had bossed things in the opening game of the season, generating a win against a poor Maidstone outfit on the day.

This time, Hayden Mitchell had plenty of support in the tight, although the line out play looked a little ragged at times.

Maidstone started in lively fashion and had the opportunity to put points on the board with an early penalty opportunity in the Bromley 22. Inexplicably, they opted for the scrum, which came to nothing. A similar opportunity, for the visitors, on ten minutes, was not passed up but fly half, Beaumont, pulled the chance wide from a straightforward position in the 22.

The first time Maidstone got the ball to Neil Graves, with some space available, he applied the coup de grace and scored under the posts. If only this could have been repeated more often, Maidstone would have been well in front



by half time. With Sam Ellis kicking the conversion, Maidstone's established a seven point advantage, but this was their only product in the first half.



As Maidstone fluffed their lines, going forward, Bromley took advantage on the counter and one surge by full back, Powell, was only just held by a last ditch tackle by Ollie Rogers. The pressure finally told as Maidstone conceded penalties on 25 and 30 minutes for Beaumont to bring the visitors back within a point of the hosts. And this was the score line as the half finished.

With Bromley spurning the chance to take the lead from another penalty wide out on the Maidstone 22, after a bright start, Maidstone went further ahead on eight minutes. This time the move was set up after a penalty to touch, with Graves on hand again to score under the posts after the line out. Ellis again converted from in front to give Maidstone more of a platform.

It took some time for this platform to be utilised, but with five minutes remaining, a similar penalty to touch yielded the field position and with the ball regained from the line out, two moves were required before Allie Moss picked up Sam Ellis's chip to score under the posts for another seven point haul.



The last score came in added time, with, almost inevitably, Neil Graves taking advantage of a defensive mistake by Bromley to touch down under the posts, allowing Ellis another straightforward conversion. With a bonus point secured and a stronger last quarter for the home side, Maidstone eventually contrived a decisive win against a competitive, but outgunned, Bromley side.



And there were other positives from the game, with Alex Hadi putting in a strong performance at in the pack and Allie Moss looking increasingly confident in his own abilities on the wing, demonstrating that the depth of talent available, for next season, is increasing.

Team

Ben Williams; Josh McKenzie; Luke Debnam (Sam Bailey 40 mins); Nick Bunyan (Damian Grab 40 mins); Hayden Mitchell; Alex Hadi; Ben Wilson (Fin Davis 78 mins); Lee Thomson; Nick Jeary; Sam Ellis; Luke Day; Neil Graves; Matt Iles; Allie Moss; Ollie Rogers