

Spitfire Golden Oldies cup

Maidstone 24

Canterbury 17

Following the torrential rain at Twickenham yesterday, the weather at the Mote was extremely autumnal, and many of the Maidstone players were complaining about the captain's decision to play towards the sun in the first half-getting their excuses in early for when they knocked on. Not sure what their excuses were in the second half.

From the kick off Maidstone dominated ball and territory, but were continually frustrated by mistakes and careless errors causing moves to break down. Dan Cummins, playing his first game in the competition was prominent in carrying strongly around the ruck, as was Nick East, who continually made ground. In the backs, Dane Smith was making holes and causing a whole load of panic in the Canterbury defence every time he carried. Set piece was good, bonded by the return of Steve Millward, who hadn't played since the 1990s and it looked like he was still playing under those laws. However, he still knew how to hook, throw in and had a few other old school techniques as well.

Maidstone possession finally told when the ball was shipped wide to Stuart Bates. From his own half he swerved round his opposite number, cut inside the full back and sprinted under the posts for a five pointer, with Tom Holmes adding the conversion.

It seemed that this might settle Maidstone but that was not the case. Canterbury caused problems when they kicked the ball high, and in one instance Maidstone failed to gather allowing Canterbury to pick up and score. Soon after a second failure to deal with a bouncing ball saw Canterbury take the lead, totally against the run of play. Lack of discipline added to Maidstone woes, giving away a series of penalties and being marched back 10 for chat-not good.

Turning round with the sun at their backs, normal service was resumed when concerted pressure on the Canterbury line led to a pushover try for number 8 Ben court, conversion slotted and Maidstone led. Despite continued pressure the knock ons kept coming causing frustration and giving Canterbury belief. However, a great break by Dan Cummins saw him get to the 5 metre line and he offloaded to the ever available Nick East (who wasn't yellow carded) to stretch the lead.

Canterbury were dogged and would not lie down. A sweeping attack down the right saw them score in the corner and the conversion would have levelled the game. More Maidstone pressure saw any number of Maidstone players go close, but when the bullocking Mayhem was held up short, scrum half Gary Whitehead sniped and scored. The conversion would have sealed the game but was just wide, so with minutes left Maidstone held a 7 point lead.

Endeavouring to place as much pressure on themselves as possible, Maidstone conceded numerous penalties close to their line and seemed unable to get out of their 22. An attack down the right looked like giving Canterbury the chance to score and possibly level, but a scything tackle from Whitehead stopped them inches from the line and Maidstone saw out the final whistle-just.

Well done to all 18 players. There was some lovely rugby at times, but we do need to cut down on errors and the penalty count.

Big thanks to Canterbury who defended stoutly, took their opportunities and never gave up.

Next game is in the new year v Ashford away Sunday 11th February.