



# Match Report

## Shepherd Neame Kent Cup



Maidstone FC 20 v Blackheath RFC 25

Played at The Mote, Sunday 13th November 2016



As is now mandated in the Kent Cup rules, Blackheath fielded their 'Heathens' side in this first round Kent Cup match against Maidstone. A cagey, penalty-strewn first half affair eventually blossomed to produce an entertaining game of rugby that the visitors narrowly won, at the last, by 25 points to 20.

While falling at the first hurdle in the cup is always disappointing, the Maidstone performance this week was more encouraging compared to last week's defeat in the league. The pack gave an outstanding display in the tight, against a larger outfit, and rediscovered their zest in the loose. After an initial wobble, the line out was secure and the back line, with Copter Brunt, promoted from the Mustangs, on the right wing, did enough to keep the opposition on their toes, throughout.

With Craig Webb resting, Olly Newton stepped up into the centre to partner Ross Cooke, with Lucian Morosan returning at scrum half. Charlie Williams stepped into the second row to replace Ben Massey and with Josh Pankhurst nursing an injury, Nathan Simpson moved across to hooker with Jack O'Connell taking over the tight head spot.

The first quarter hour of the game saw both sides seeking territorial advantage from the boot with neither making a significant impact. A penalty just inside the Maidstone half demonstrated the kicking power of Blackheath full back, McEvoy, but his long range attempt drifted just wide of the posts.



With the game approaching the half hour and the penalty count rising, a yellow card was issued to the Blackheath hooker for killing the ball in the ruck and Trudgen took advantage of the resultant penalty to get the Maidstone score rolling.

**BOVIS  
HOMES**

**SHARPAK**  
AYLESHAM

**GLOSROSE**  
GROUP

**SIBLEY  
PARES**

CHARTERED SURVEYORS

SINCE 1888  
**SHEPHERD  
NEAME**  
MASTER BREWERS

**Morlings**  
SOLICITORS

**topnotch**  
health club

*Designer*  
**Contracts**

**YE OLDE  
THIRSTY PIG**

**VIVID  
ASSOCIATES**



A quick reply from McEvoy evened things up and with Blackheath back to full complement it looked like the half would be reached on parity. But what turned out to be the difference in the sides, namely speed on the wings, produced a score for the visitors right on half time. Winger Hamilton, who had already shown he had pace to burn, cut through the middle of the Maid-

stone defence to set up Maidstone old-boy, Rob Field, to score half way out. There was much discussion as to whether Hamilton had been tackled as he made his break, but he had the presence of mind to get to his feet and continue his run. With no whistle to stop play, the moment's confusion was enough to allow the break to be decisive. McEvoy's conversion hit the post, so Blackheath took just a five point lead into the break.

With both skippers warned by the referee to reduce the penalty count, an early yellow card for Maidstone No 8, Matt Iles, for not rolling away, put them on the back foot. But this was quickly followed by another yellow for Blackheath, for kicking the ball through the ruck, which Trudgen turned into points, to reduce the deficit to 6-8, with ten minutes on the clock.



It was clear that the visitors possessed more pace and power in their three-quarter line than Maidstone but without a decisive cutting edge in the centre, and strong defence from the home side, chances to outflank Maidstone were few and far between. But with fifteen minutes on the clock, left wing, Wekpe, was given enough space to run past his opposite number to score in the corner. With McEvoy adding the conversion, Blackheath opened their lead to 15-6.



Maidstone replied with a good spell of attacking play that saw them camped on the visitor's line. But a relieving kick by Blackheath provided an opportunity for right wing Hamilton to run on to a fortuitous bounce and outpace the defence to score under the posts, making the conversion a formality and extending the lead to 22-6.

With the last quarter of the game just beginning, was this the start of a try-fest by the visitors or could Maidstone get back into the game? The answer was soon provided by a rampaging Maidstone front row. Firstly, replacement prop, Danny Baker, showed a



clean pair of heels to the opposition to take play deep into the Blackheath half and with play switching wide to the right, a subtle dummy by hooker, Nathan Simpson, saw him cross the line to score. With Trudgen adding the conversion, Maidstone cut the deficit to 13-22.

The deficit was reduced to two points just on the half hour. A Blackheath scrum on their own five metre line was turned over to Maidstone following a knock on at the base and with a free kick, taken quickly by Morosan, from the resulting scrum, McConnell



scrambled over the line and Trudgen added the conversion to set up an exciting last ten minutes.

With the momentum seemingly with Maidstone, the visitors, began to show how they could play and wrestled back the initiative with some enterprising running from their three-quarters. Inevitably, this pressure led to opportunities and a penalty on the Maidstone 22 was meat and drink to the boot of McEvoy to seal the win for Blackheath.



Once Maidstone have overcome the disappointment of this loss they will be able to take a number of positives from the game. The

pack, for one, regained its zest in the loose with the entire front row looking lively; the second row refused to take a backward step and the back row, led by Matt Iles, featured strongly in both defence and attack. With Morosan restored to scrum half, the back line regained its coherence and Trudgen's kicking, from hand and the tee, continues to improve, giving increased tactical options in play.

**Maidstone** Ben Williams; Nathan Simpson; Jack O'Connell: Adam Knight; Charlie Williams: Ben Knight; Jack Lamb; Matt Iles: Lucian Morosan; Brendan Trudgen: Matt Moore; Olly Newton; Ross Cooke; Copter Brunt: Alex Clarke  
Replacements: Danny Baker; Matt Vickers; Tom Chandler; Filip Perica

