



**Brachers**  
law



## Match Report



League - London SE 2

Heathfield & Waldron RFC 7 v Maidstone FC 78

Played at Heathfield, Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014

After two weeks of disappointments a restoration of both form and confidence sees Maidstone climb back into second spot and pole position for the playoffs with a convincing 78-7 win against a limited, Heathfield & Waldron side that have struggled all season; a result that also confirms the Sussex club's relegation to London 3(SE).

After two narrow reversals in as many weeks, this fixture postponed from February came at a timely point as the county town club look to put their playoff aspirations back on track, in bright sunshine and on a firm pitch far more suited to Maidstone's all-court style of play, bottom club Heathfield were remorselessly put to the sword by a rampant visiting side who ran in twelve tries in this one sided contest. Yet, there is still room for improvement: with a greater accuracy of execution, the margin of this 12 try mauling could have been even greater.

The side featured a number of changes, mainly in the scrum, Luke Debnam stepped up from the Mustangs for the unavailable Ollie Smith and Nick East in at hooker to complete a front row alongside skipper Ben Williams. James Iles moved into the second row, with Matt Vickers on the back row and taking the Man of the Match accolade for his efforts. In the back division, Sam McPherson returned from injury to the scrum half berth, with Lucien Morosan moving to the wing, and Brad Ford in for his second start at flyhalf.

Maidstone set their stall out early, although early efforts to play their high tempo offloading game were initially thwarted by Heathfield's defence, allied to some handling errors and imprecise execution. It wasn't until the end of the first quarter that Maidstone got the scoreboard rolling; following clean ball from a lineout near halfway, good offloading and support play pierced the home defence with Ben Brill on hand to take the final pass to coast in from the 22m. With a solid set piece providing clean ball from both scrum and lineout, the county town club were soon into their stride and tries followed at regular intervals with Ben Brill getting a second score, brother Sam touching down for the first of his, Lucien Morosan, Neil Graves and with the pick of the tries being James Iles' score following a slick dummy run and reverse pass to the blindside by Sam McPherson allowing Iles a 15m run to touchdown. With Brad Ford unerringly accurate with the boot a posting a personal haul of 18 points in the match, Maidstone reached the interval with a 42 point advantage.

The second half followed much the same vein, with tries at regular intervals throughout the play; second scores for Sam Brill and Lucian Morosan plus a try for skipper Ben Williams and first league scores for Nick East and Gareth Ellis, whose strong runs made inroads into the Heathfield defence throughout the match. The injection of fresh legs from the bench in the form of Lee Evans, Nick Bunyan and Matt Iles at the end of the third quarter kept Maidstone very much on the front foot. However it was Heathfield who had

struggled on manfully who were rewarded for their dogged determination, when a loose piece of Maidstone play presented them with an opportunity to pick up loose ball and outpace the wrong footed Maidstone defence to touch down and add the extras with a difficult touchline conversion, reducing the deficit to 7-73 with ten minutes remaining. Maidstone weren't finished yet and a Matt Iles try in the closing minutes completed the scoring, the tally at the final whistle sitting at 7-78 to the visitors.

This result was built on the foundation of a solid forward platform, typified by Matt Vickers' Man of the Match performance, which provided a good supply of quick and clean ball to the three quarters all afternoon. As always there is still room for improvement, and a greater degree of accuracy and crisper execution of some of the untaken opportunities could have increased the scoreline.

Maidstone's playoff aspirations remain in their own hands, and this confidence boosting result will serve them well next week when they host local rivals Sevenoaks at The Mote; a side that still have an outside chance of making the playoffs themselves.

**Maidstone:**

Ben Williams; Nick East; Luke Debnam: Gareth Ellis; James Iles: Jack Davidson; Matt Vickers; Ben Brill: Sam McPherson; Brad Ford: Lucian Morosan; Willie Brown; Neil Graves; Sam Brill: Josh Jensen

Replacements (All used): Lee Evan; Matt Iles; Nick Bunyan

