

Maidstone barbarians 12 Whitstable 3rds/2nds 40

Played at The Mote, 19th Oct 2013

After a couple of mismatches in which Maidstone barbarians fought hard and creditably against the odds, they only had themselves to blame for this defeat at the hands of Whitstable 2nds. The defensive line was ragged and half-hearted throughout the first half and for some of the second, as Whitstable's fast backs were given the time and space to run at, round and through some feeble tackling. Only a handful of Maidstone players, notably fly half Simon Seal, seemed prepared to put their bodies on the line and hit the opposition hard and memorably. This meant that Maidstone found themselves chasing a considerable deficit at half time, against a team that were not significantly superior to them.

Though many of the defensive frailties frustratingly remained, at least Maidstone gathered themselves for a much improved second half performance in attack, scoring two tries, the second of which had a previous 5th team report writer (Mr Ellesmere) fresh from playing with the veterans assuming that Maidstone must have won the game easily with such excellent play...

The first of the two tries was started by fullback Paul Hodges running a kick hard and fast straight back at the defence, taking the tackle and recycling the ball for the forwards to rumble on through two more phases and for prop Matt Whattley to skip gracefully out of the last few tackles to cross the line from fifteen metres out. The second saw the forwards again going through the phases before second row Ben Hughes popped a perfectly timed pass to Hodges, joining the line late, who shipped a quick, accurate ball to put Seal through a gap in the defence to give himself an easy conversion.

Unfortunately, there was still time for a further lapse in defence, leaving Whitstable with the last try and Maidstone bemoaning a poor defensive display that spoiled a very good attacking one. Thanks are due to guest Will Rush for his usual high quality guest appearance at scrum half and mention should be made of Barney's astonishingly elegant catch chasing Seal's kick off and soaring like a winged gazelle, and of Pete Bulford's courageous tackling back in the second half for which he received the reward of a heavily stamped on hand thanks to the clumsiness of his own full back: hopefully, a quick recovery will be the order of the day.