

Maidstone Vets 34 - 12 Dartford Valley II

HT 17 - 05

FT 34 - 12

Match report (M. Ellesmere)

With confirmation that Simon Wright was again generously sacrificing game time to referee our game, the question on everybody's lips was how many metres Gary Whitehead would be marched down the pitch? The answer was somewhat anticlimactic. None. However we did find ourselves being ordered back at one stage - for something today's scrum half Mick Walker may or may not have said. Or even thought?

With Gary admirably swapping his usual scrum half position for prop perhaps our referee was just basing his decisions on former no.9s who he has had the privilege/ burden [delete as appropriate] of playing alongside (and listening to) on numerous occasions and who may have clouded his mind over the years. Two of whom happened to be spectating at the club on Saturday*.

Had they been watching this particular game they might have also been in awe at the entertainment on offer like those who were present. (Well that's what our skipper/manager said and he was spectating)

For the second week in a row we started on the front foot, helped by outside centre Eugene Moore stripping his opposite number of the ball the first time Dartford Valley spun the ball wide. From then on we camped in their 22 until a well worked scissors saw inside centre Richard Cutbill zig-zag his way to the line for a converted try.

The opposition hit back. A brief period of pressure in our 22 ended up with one of their (huge) props bowling over our defence (ok, me) to touch down.

We ended the half the stronger though. Firstly through another well worked move in midfield when a dummy scissors pop pass saw Eugene fighting his way to the tryline and then working the ball out to full back Chris Leggatt to score in the corner.

Into the second period and with the opposition tiring it was time for the scything pace of our full back to find even more space (despite the opposition's captain putting a hit out on him at half time). Somehow Chris didn't add to his tally but hearing the opposition cry "don't kick it to him" as they did exactly that was some compensation.

The next person who did get their name on the scoresheet however was replacement winger Finn Lewis (on for Paul Hodges) making his way back into the game after a 4 year sojourn. Finn scored twice (his second being the final play) and showed excellent finishing skills in doing so.

Sandwiched in between Finn's tries was another one for us and one for them through their pack who were very strong in the scrum (much to the discomfort of our stand in

props Tom Clarke and Gary Whitehead). Although to be fair Tom is hardly a stand in prop now - almost making the coveted position his own.

Our other try came from yet another half decent scissors in midfield leading to Richard breaking through and eventually finding our other winger (just before he was converted into a second row) Stuart Bates. He pretty much went through their last defender (in traditional lock forward style) to pile over in the corner.

Shout outs also to No 8 Chris 'special forces' May for clearing up a lot of untidy ball at the base of the scrum and for making the hard yards; Mick Walker for his excellent touch finders; flanker Colin Frost for, at times, pinballing his way downfield; second row Gary Griffiths for his lineout work (and even one or two off-loads) and hooker Mark Ingram for not passing the ball one handed (and nearly scoring).

Thanks also to Dartford Valley for taking the fixture at the last minute (you can read how we came about this fixture elsewhere).

MotM: Chris May (see above) though proved himself not to be a special force in the boat race in finishing outside the medal positions.

TotM: Tom Clarke (see last week. & the week before).

Ref: Simon Wright.

*Messrs Randall & Tugwell (in case you were wondering).

ME.

Squad:

1. Tom Clarke;
2. Mark Ingram;
3. Gary Whitehead;
4. Gary Griffiths replaced in 2nd half by Stuart Bates;
5. Nigel Maddaford;
6. Adrian Clark;
7. Colin Frost;
8. Chris May;
9. Mick Walker (Captain);
10. Matthew Ellesmere;

11. Paul Hodges 1st half Finn Lewis 2nd half;
12. Richard Cutbill;
13. Eugene Moore;
14. Stuart Bates replaced in 2nd half by Danny McLeish;
15. Chris Leggat;
16. Karim Neseyif (Manager & unused sub);
70. Phil Hadfield (Photographer)

Spectators: Quite a few, inc. the very vocal Finn Lewis clan;

Nick Neseyif;

Bella Neseyif.