

Match Report

Maidstone 49 v Dorking XV 7

by Trevor Langley

Home at The Mote, Saturday 1 September, 2012 Kick Off – 3.00 pm



This game, against a Dorking second string, was the second pre-season game for Maidstone, in the build up to their first competitive fixture, next week. The score line of 49-7, in Maidstone's favour, reflected an encouraging outing for the home side against a unit that came to play, in a competitive spirit.

With seven changes at the break, including the whole front five, the second half lost some of the continuity shown in the first forty minutes. But the most important feature was the demonstration that Maidstone has a game plan, centred on the distribution skills of Willie Brown at fly half, which will stand them in good stead when the season proper gets under way.

The second pleasing feature is the strength in depth in the squad. If injuries can be kept at bay, the competition for places in both the backs and the forwards will be ferocious.

One new face that stood out was James Davies on the left wing. A student at Loughborough undertaking a work-placement year, he showed flair and speed on the left wing that consistently troubled his opposite number. The team is also developing an Eastern European flavour, with Romanian scrum half Lucian Morosan and No 8/Prop, Mickael Majcker, from Poland adding their strengths.



Maidstone demonstrated the benefit of a big front five, when from the off, they regained the ball and marched a loose maul down to the try line. Skipper Ben Williams was the man with his hands on the ball to secure the score with only a minute on the clock.



A second score after eight minutes resulted from positive defence, when a Dorking passing movement in their own half broke down and from the loose, Maidstone quickly recycled the ball to feed Hyland who touched down by the posts. Foley added the simple conversion to establish a twelve point lead.

Over eagerness and lack of precision saw a series of penalties against the home side, and Dorking took full advantage by kicking to touch in the Maidstone 22, from there setting up a catch and drive. While this was held, slack marking allowed the scrum half to elude his marker and slip over in the corner. A fine

conversion reduced the lead to five points, delivering the message that lapses in concentration are costly against a motivated team.



While some of the rough edges persisted, Maidstone's desire to find open space by moving the ball wide, started to pay dividends. A quick tap penalty saw Willie Brown release Davies down the blind side and his pace took him outside the cover to score in the corner. Shortly thereafter, a scrum against the head allowed Brown to find a gap in the line and claim the score himself.

Just on the half hour, Brown repeated the process, this time receiving a pass from Neil Graves on the overlap, after a five metre scrum.

A fractious element crept into the play for the last ten minutes of the half after second row, Evans, was dumped on his back after catching a restart. But with the half-time whistle approaching, Maidstone scored another try. Scrum half, Morosan, was the instigator from the base of the scrum, with centre Neil Graves the recipient, running in from the 22. With Willie Brown adding the conversion, Maidstone ended the half 36-7 to the good.



With a radical rejig to the scrum in the second half, it took the first twenty minutes to re-establish the necessary understanding in the pack. But further tries by Neil Graves and, finally, second row, Iles, completed the scoring, with Willie Brown adding the conversions, to bring the final score to 49-7.



There is still plenty to work on after this display. The passing game is improving and the desire to find space for the receiver is good. But the balance in the centre looks too targeted to power, when a little more subtlety may be needed to unpick better defences. The forwards look to be a powerful unit, for the first time for a number of years, but how will they perform when the chips are down?

So, with these questions to be answered, let the season begin.

Maidstone XV

Ben Williams; Sam Bailey; Steve Stoppani; Lee Evans; James Iles; Damian Grabb; Paul Hyland; Mickael Majcker; Lucien Morosan; Willie Brown; James Davies; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Dan Foley; Matt Iles