



Match Report

League - London 3 South East

Gillingham Anchorians 3 v Maidstone 48

Played at Anchorians, Saturday 8 December, 2012



According to coach, Andy Foley, this was Maidstone's 'best performance, so far'. And who is to doubt him after this 48-3 demolition of Gillingham Anchorians on their ground. If one was being picky, there was almost too much enthusiasm from the team and a number of chances went begging. But the quality of the play was outstanding at times and the penultimate try, by James Davies, had a real touch of class.

But the essence of the performance came from the interplay between the forwards and backs. It would have taken a far better side than Anchorians to contain the bullocking runs of Lee Evans and with Paul Hyland in fine form at open side; the back row had an outstanding game, snuffing out the limited opportunities presented to the opposition before linking with the outsides.

Ben Williams started this game on the bench after bruising his ribs in last week's game, and, with Richard Parker unavailable, Danny Baker stepped up to captain the side. Being the experienced prop, he is, he will now see captaincy as a simple addition to his other duties, if this was a true example of what is required. But this was a walk in the park for him as everybody knew what to do and delivered to near perfection.

Alex Sterzu was given an opportunity to start in the blind side slot, with Sam Bailey moving across to prop in Williams' absence. And with the normal centre pairing of Neil Graves and Mark Dorman restored, the three-quarters had a strong, pacy look from the outset.





It could be said that the game, as a contest, was determined in the first minute. From Maidstone's kick off, Anchorians kicked the ball back and from Davies's catch and run and the subsequent ruck, the ball was quickly recycled and Lee Evans burst through on to a short pass to release Sam Bailey, who timed his return to perfection, for Evans to score by the posts. With Sam Brill's conversion a formality, Maidstone

established a seven point lead with barely a minute on the clock.

This was extended after five minutes, when from a line out on the left, the ball was spun across field for Sam Brill to release Morosan and then run round him to take the scoring pass. While the touchline conversion was missed, Brill added to the score after 22 minutes with a simple penalty from the 22.



While Maidstone were clearly on top, Anchorians began to get their own game together and while attacking opportunities were rare, they showed good defensive skills to contain the visitors. A string of penalties to Maidstone resulted from the, at times, desperate Anchorians defence and, if there was a criticism of Maidstone, it was that too many of these penalty kicks failed to find touch and when they did, the line out malfunctioned.



But the power of Maidstone's combined efforts could not be contained indefinitely and, just past the half hour, Evans made another break to set up Dorman for the try with Brill adding the conversion to stretch the lead to 22 points. Just before half time, Matt Iles finished off a move that stretched the hosts both ways before finding a gap in defence and with Brill again adding the conversion, Maidstone finished the half 29 points to the good.

Maidstone started the second half as they had finished the first, camping in the Anchorians' half and pressurising their defence. James Iles was the first on the scoreboard, after eight minutes, with Brill again on target for the conversion to stretch the lead to 36 points. And although, Maidstone continued to dominate play, a combination of the Anchorians defence and a lack of composure conspired to thwart Maidstone's attacks.

With a rare foray into the Maidstone half, Anchorians were awarded a penalty on the 22 which was gratefully converted by the fly half, to get points on the board just past the quarter hour. But from here on, it was the Maidstone machine that dominated proceedings and with the game





moving into the final quarter, produced the best move of the afternoon. From a scrum on the right, the ball was moved swiftly across the field to release James Davies on the left wing, just past the half way line. His burst of acceleration took him outside his opposite number and gave him a clear run to the line allowing an easy conversion from in front of the posts.

A further try by Matt Iles from a push over scrum just on the half hour took the score to 48-3, and a last minute move, which might have taken the score past the half-century, but for a foot in touch, was the last real action of the game.

In summary, Maidstone won this game without really getting out of third gear. The benefit of a settled side with a raft of suitable replacements to step up, when required, is reaping dividends and, on this form, it will take an exceptional performance from another team in the league to defeat them. The RFU vase could provide more challenging opposition in the next round, when, currently undefeated, Old Priorians visit the Mote, on 2nd February.



Maidstone

Sam Bailey; Josh McKenzie; Danny Baker: James Iles; Lee Evans: Alex Sterzu; Paul Hyland; Matt Iles: Ivan Walkling; Willie Brown: James Davies; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Lucien Morosan: Sam Brill

Replacements (All used): Michal Majcher; Ben Williams; Jack Naismith