



Match Report

RFU Senior Vase, Round 2

Pulborough 0 v Maidstone 88

Played at Pulborough, Saturday 10 November, 2012

Maidstone had considerable success in the RFU Senior Vase competition last season, reaching the national semi-finals before losing a close game to the eventual winners, Wells. Emulating, or beating, last year's success has become an unwritten target for this season and after this 88 point demolition of Pulborough, who is to say this is unreasonable.



The caveats come in the quality of the opposition and, on this occasion, while they never gave up and tackled themselves to a standstill, Pulborough offered little in attack. Apart from a short period at the beginning of the second half, they singularly failed to threaten the Maidstone line.

Conversely, Maidstone had a game plan, which they stuck to throughout, demonstrating the increasing sophistication and togetherness within the side.



Having beaten Pulborough in the earlier league fixture at The Mote, Maidstone took a few liberties with team selection, leaving out skipper Ben Williams, second row Lee Evans and back row, Paul Hyland to allow niggling injuries time to heal. In addition, Matt Vickers was selected to start at hooker, for a first team debut, with Sam Bailey moving to prop.

Lucian Morosan started this game on the bench, with James Davies moving back to his more familiar position on the left wing, with Sam Brill starting at full back. But this was very much a squad performance with all four replacements getting considerable game time, with Morosan looking sharp when taking over from Ivan Walkling at scrum half and Dane Smith adding an extra dimension in the centre, in the second half. So, on reflection, this demonstrated the increasing strength of the squad coach Andy Foley has built this year and the increasing togetherness that skipper, Ben Williams has fostered.

After the traumas experienced by the pack, last week, much the same eight, showed greater dedication and ruthlessness and were never under threat in the tight or at the line out. The hard yards were taken through the skipper, for the day, Richard Parker, with Alex Hadi showing a willingness to concentrate on the hard stuff, as well as showing his other side when joining the threequarters.



It was clear from the kick off that Maidstone were going to be the superior side on the day, when, having had the ball returned to them via a relieving kick, they never allowed Pulborough another touch until Jack Naismith



finished a move in the right hand corner. Within ten minutes, Naismith and Danny Baker had added further tries to post a fifteen point cushion.

And from here it became a question of how many, with the fiftieth point being posted just on half time. A Dorman hat trick, to book-end last week's, and another for No 8, Matt Iles, complemented by one from Sam Brill, completed the scoring, with five conversions posting the half century.

Often with such a first half scoreline, the second half can be a disappointment, as attention wanders and the opposition find their feet. And while there was a resurgent period for Pulborough on the restart, it was clear that Maidstone were determined to be ruthless: and so it proved.

With nothing in the laws allowing the referee to stop the contest to prevent further punishment, Maidstone went relentlessly on, posting their first try after eleven minutes and five further ties throughout the half. A notable brace from debutant Matt Vickers, within three minutes of each other, provided a highlight and his notable dropped pass within a whisker of his own hat trick, brought touch line amusement.



With four further conversions, a second half thirty eight points completed the scoring, posting Maidstone's largest winning margin for some considerable time. But with bigger challenges coming up over the next couple of weeks in the league, Andy Foley was adamant the squad will need to retain their focus and further up their game, if they are to really prove their credentials.



Maidstone

Sam Bailey; Matt Vickers; Danny Baker: James Iles; Alex Hadi: Richard Parker; Jack Lamb;
Matt Iles: Ivan Walkling; Willie Brown: James Davies; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Jack
Naismith: Sam Brill

Replacements: Mickael Majcher; Josh McKenzie; Lucian Morosan; Dane Smith