



## Match Report

League - London 3 South East

Maidstone 50 v Uckfield 7

Played at The Mote, Saturday 12 January, 2013

On a cold, raw and wet day, when the prospect of sitting in front of a log fire is an appealing prospect, Maidstone warmed the afternoon with a 50-7 dismissal of a vibrant Uckfield side that came to the Mote to show they were a team to be reckoned with. The fact that the final margin was



this wide was down to the fitness of the Maidstone team, which came into its own in the last quarter of the game, when the early efforts of the visitors to contain their hosts began to take its effect.

The spitting rain, which increased steadily throughout the game, was no bar to Maidstone and, although handling errors did increase as the game wore on, and the heavy pitch sapped legs, their attempts to run the ball from their own 22, late in the second half, warmed the spirits of the spectators, who must have thought they were at a sevens tournament on occasions.

Uckfield contributed fully to the entertainment. They knew that they had to compete from the off and try to put Maidstone on the back foot to have a chance in the game and this they did with gusto. The Maidstone back row and half backs were under constant pressure as the visitors defence lived on the off-side line. For the first half, Uckfield's rucking caused Maidstone concern and delivered turnover ball on a number of occasions.

And when the ball was moved wide, the tackling was ferocious and covered the whole field. James Davies felt its impact with the line at his mercy, to be swept into touch after one sweeping move early in the first quarter, when he would normally have expected to score.



With Paul Hyland rested, Alex Sterzu came into the back row to join Matthew Iles and Richard Parker in a fluid back three. Ivan Walkling started at scrum half this week with Lucien Morosan on the right wing, while Sam Bailey reclaimed the starting hookers spot. But the versatility in the squad allowed significant switching of position with the replacements, Matt Vickers, Mickael Majcher and Jack Naismith, playing a full part as the game progressed.



Maidstone started the game as they left off at Folkestone, camping in the Uckfield 22 from the off. And with only two minutes on the clock, Sam Brill finished off a move in the right hand corner, his conversion attempt drifted narrowly wide but

the early points were deceptive as Uckfield got their game together and came back vigorously at their hosts.

A simple penalty chance for the visitors was spurned on the quarter hour and Maidstone punished this profligacy with a second try as the half hour approached. This time it was the forwards that set up the opportunity and Matthew Iles who forced his way over from close range, by the posts. Brill posted the conversion for a twelve point lead but it was the visitors turn to score next, catching Maidstone on the hop with a tap penalty after sweeping downfield from the restart. The simple conversion by Joe Miller, reduced the deficit to five points.



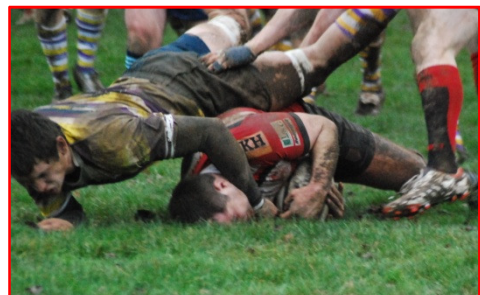
But this Maidstone team don't do mental wobbles and with half time approaching, they extended their lead. After No 8 Matthew Iles was held up over the line, the subsequent 5-metre scrum yielded the ball and Sam Bailey was the ultimate beneficiary of the touchdown.



Uckfield had another chance to reduce the deficit, just before half-time, but Miller was again off target with his penalty attempt.

With Vickers on in the back row for Richard Parker and with instructions to compete more at the rucks and mauls, Maidstone started the second half brightly. A catch and drive from the Uckfield 22, somehow involved Neil Graves and he burst from the pack to score under the posts. The Brill conversion extended the lead to seventeen points to give a comfortable margin for the second half, as well as deliver the bonus point.

A Ben Williams try just past the quarter, after a superb break from the base of the scrum by Matthew Iles to set up the opportunity, made the victory secure and with Sam Brill's conversion hitting the post before going over, it was clear the omens were with Maidstone.



With two subsequent tries finished off by Brill, coming into the line, and a last minute try for Willie Brown, following a long snaking run by Jack Naismith, Maidstone took full advantage of tiring legs in the Uckfield team to post fifty points with the final conversion.



While the victory was secured early in the second half, the opposition provided by the visitors was exactly that required to keep Maidstone on their toes; for them to realise that greater examinations will present themselves this season and that maintaining mental toughness to repel every challenge is a challenge in itself.

## **Maidstone**

Ben Williams; Sam Bailey; Danny Baker: James Iles; Lee Evans: Alex Sterzu; Richard Parker; Matthew Iles: Ivan Walkling; Willie Brown: James Davies; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Lucian Morosan: Sam Brill

Replacements (All used): Matt Vickers; Mickael Majcher; Jack Naismith