



Match Report

League - London 3 South East

Maidstone 114 v Park House 3

Played at The Mote, Saturday 16 February, 2013



It's difficult to know where to start with this game. After last week's mixed performance, this 114-3 drubbing of Park House was the complete antithesis of the former game. While the spectators had no complaints, witnessing eighteen tries, some of the highest order, coach, Andy Foley, showed more than mild irritation, on occasions, when Maidstone's concentration levels slipped.

Only at the start of the second half did Park House conjure up a spell in which they competed with this Maidstone wrecking machine and this equivalence lasted no more ten minutes. After that, it was business as usual and eight tries were run in to almost match the ten of the first half.

So complete was Maidstone's domination that they had gained the bonus point for four tries after eighteen minutes, a record of some sort, undoubtedly.



With seven changes from the team that beat Ashford the previous week, the visitors may have seen a chink in the league leader's armour. But with regulars Lee Evans, Mark Dorman and Neil Graves returning to the side, Jack Naismith starting this time and Josh McKenzie and Alex Hadi stepping up from the Mustangs, this may have been an illusion.

And so it proved. With their first try on the board after two minutes, Maidstone were quickly into their

stride. Josh Pankhurst got the touch down after a catch and drive from a lineout in the visitors 22 and, with the exception of a penalty for Maidstone going over the top at the restart, converted by full-back, Russ, from then on, it was one-way traffic.



In the earlier game at Park House, their pack caused considerable trouble to Maidstone by their tactic of setting up the eight man drive, resulting in three tries on that occasion. With this in the collective memory, the Maidstone pack was quick to counter any such move this time and, while Park House continued to drive through their forwards, they were continually frustrated by a well organised defence.

Maidstone, on the other hand, looked to move the ball every time they won it. The restarts saw the front row and Josh Pankhurst to the fore and their powerful runs often fractured the Park House defence, allowing the supporting runner to power deep into the visitors' territory.



Pankhurst soon added to his first try, after a solo effort by Ben Williams, followed by the first of full back, Sam Brill's, hat trick for the afternoon. It was unfortunate that he left his kicking boots in the changing room, managing only a fifty percent success rate before Willie Brown took over the kicking duties in the second half. But his all-round performance was enough to win him the man-of-the-match accolade on an afternoon where any one of a dozen contenders put themselves forward.

The only black spot in the first half was an ankle injury to blind side flanker, Paul Hyland, resulting in his replacement by James Iles after five minutes. Everything else was perfection, with all the back line, bar the scrum half, getting a try, reflecting the way that Maidstone elected to play the game. Ankle taps on a number of occasions prevented James Davies adding to his try's on twenty minutes, with both wingers hovering around for the final pass, whenever the break was made.

With the game and bonus point sewn up before the end of the first quarter, Ivan Walking gave way to Adrian Hogben, a recent recruit, at scrum half. And with the pack so dominant, the team barely skipped a beat as he brought his own dynamism to the position.

With the score standing at sixty points to three at the break, Park House were staring into the abyss. But they were undeterred and for the first fifteen minutes of the second half, threw their all into their play. With their forwards driving forcefully, Maidstone spent some time pinned in their own 22. With a little more cohesion in the three quarters, the visitors may have breached the Maidstone defence, but normal service was resumed





thereafter, on Maidstone's first foray into the visitor's half. Sam Brill finished the move but the slick passing through the threequarters' hands presented him with the opportunity.

Further second half tries by Willie Brown, Neil Graves, Mark Dorman, Sam Bailey and a brace for Matt Iles completed the try count with six conversions by Brown adding to the total.

In summary, Maidstone were far too powerful for the visitors on this occasion. But by playing what was in front of them and maintaining their concentration for the majority of the game, Maidstone used the occasion to good effect. With injuries taking their toll on many of the weaker sides in the league, one sided affairs such as this can happen. But as long as Maidstone maintain perspective on these wins, they will realise they still have challenges ahead.

Maidstone

Sam Bailey; Josh McKenzie; Ben Williams: Alex Hadi; Lee Evans: Paul Hyland; Josh Pankhurst; Matt Iles: Ivan Walkling; Willie Brown: James Davies; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Jack Naismith: Sam Brill

Replacements (All used): Michael Majcher; James Iles; Adrian Hogben

