

Match Report

Pre-Season Match

Maidstone 12 v Tonbridge Juddians 17

Played at The Mote, Saturday 17th August

KO: 3-00pm

Rugby returned to The Mote on Saturday as Maidstone's pre-season preparation hit the business end of affairs, with the county town club hosting National 3 (SE) side Tonbridge Juddians in the first of their pre-season fixtures. With TJs having had two competitive seasons at National league level and been very much involved in the promotion battles in both of their campaigns; the high level opposition provided a real and competitive challenge against which Head Coach Andy Foley was able to gauge his team's progress after last season's successful campaign and provided a first meaningful outing for a number of players who have joined the club in the closed season.

As was to be expected in these early outings, a degree of match sharpness was lacking and a bit of 'ring-rust' was in evidence, but it was obvious that both sides were looking to run the ball with the home side having to work hard to cope with TJs pace and speed of action. However, with a solid defence holding firm it was the home side that posted the first score towards the end of the first quarter, with Neil Graves creating the first real break and front row Sam Bailey on hand to take the scoring pass. TJs responded early in the second quarter with their forwards able to drive over following a catch & drive from a lineout inside the Maidstone 22m.

With a 7-6 lead for the hosts, half-time saw both sides making a number of changes and it was the Maidstone continuity that suffered most, when from a TJs scrum inside the Maidstone 22m a defensive lapse saw a large gap appear which the TJs backline easily exploited to touch down under the posts. A further score by their backline wide on the right saw TJs stretch their lead to 10-points towards the end of the third quarter but it was Maidstone who applied most of the pressure in the closing minutes of the game with scrum-half Adrian Hogben able to slip a couple of tackles to touch down and reduce the deficit.

Despite the final score of 12-17 in favour of the visitors, the Maidstone performance will provide coach Andy Foley with plenty of encouragement as the side complete their pre-season preparations for the coming league and cup campaigns.

Next Fixtures:

Saturday 31st August; Away, v Gosport & Fareham (Ldn 2SW, Pre-Season).

Saturday 7th September, 'Double Header':

Maidstone Mustangs XV v The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (President's Cup).

Maidstone 1st XV v Dartfordians (Shepherd Neame kent Cup Rd 1)