



Match Report

London Division 3(SE)

Horsham 24 v Maidstone 45

Played at Horsham, Saturday 17 November, 2012

After last week's comprehensive victory in the RFU Senior Vase, Maidstone were on the road to Sussex yet again, this time to take on a Horsham side who presented a stiff challenge and whose recent results had seen them move up to third in the table. After last weeks' big win head coach Andy Foley had been quick to remind the squad to maintain their focus and that they would need to raise their game another notch to secure the win.



The side saw skipper Ben Williams return in the front row with Sam Bailey reverting to hooker, whilst in the second row Lee Evans returned, along with Paul Hyland in the back row, the back division remained largely unchanged except for Lucien Morosan on the right wing instead of Jack Naismith. For their part Horsham were certainly up for this top of the table clash with a combative set of forwards and a creative backline that was determined to run the ball.

In truth the scoreline at the final whistle flattered the hosts who made a meaningful start to the match but were in general second best throughout the contest: and two intercept tries, the second when Maidstone were pushing for a half century of points gave their total a certain gloss.



Maidstone by no means had it all their own way with Horsham starting brightly and the visitors conceding a number of penalties in the opening minutes, one of which led to a yellow card for flanker Paul Hyland and gave Horsham an early opportunity to open their account with a penalty from 40m in front of the posts which they duly took. Maidstone applied pressure straight from the restart and a poor Horsham clearance kick saw Morosan able to run at the defence and feed

Sam Bailey who crossed to the right of the posts, Sam Brill added the extras to give Maidstone a lead they never looked like conceding. Horsham were still looking to apply pressure and it was from the hosts attacking lineout on the Maidstone 5m that Maidstone were able to turn the ball over and clear their lines, pressure on the Horsham receiver saw Neil Graves rob the ball to feed Sam Brill who touched down to extend the lead on 15minutes. As the game moved into the second quarter Maidstone were holding the ascendancy and the pressure told as they moved the ball wide for James Davies to cross in the left corner to extend the lead. Horsham though responded and from a lineout close to the

Maidstone line they were able to set up the maul and cross for their own converted score to narrow the deficit. The half-hour saw Maidstone's Willie Brown yellow carded for what was a

harsh interpretation by the referee of a dangerous tackle, but despite the man deficit it was Maidstone that were exerting the pressure with their loose forwards making penetrative runs around the fringes, and after a period camped on the Horsham line skipper Ben Williams capitalised to cross under the posts for the bonus point score, with Brill adding the extras to take the score to 10-24 at the interval.



Maidstone started the second period much the brighter and following a break by Morosan and Ivan Walkling down the right flank from the kick-off, Williams was on hand to pick up the recycled ball to cross in the first minute. An intercepted pass by the Horsham No8 to score under the posts briefly gave the hosts hope of a revival but with much of the contest was being fought in midfield it was Maidstone that possessed the power and penetration to keep Horsham on the back foot and as the match entered the final quarter the visitors were again



on the scoreboard when a period of sustained pressure on the Horsham line led to a penalty. Quick thinking by Jack Lamb saw a 'tap & go' and the ball was shipped to Willie Brown who crossed midway out to the left of the posts. The last ten minutes saw Bailey cross for his second try after another period of concerted pressure, and whilst an intercept try by Horsham in the final five minutes gave them the hope of a bonus point, Maidstone's defence was able to contain the threat.

In summary, Maidstone were almost always in control of this match and with some improved handling could have posted additional scores; and as they approach what will be only their third home fixture of this campaign next week, they sit atop the division and playing some dynamic, powerful and penetrative rugby; although head coach Andy Foley will be urging them to stay focussed and improve the precision in the execution of their chances.

Maidstone

Ben Williams; Sam Bailey; Danny Baker; James Iles; Lee Evans; Richard Parker; Paul Hyland; Matt Iles; Ivan Walkling; Willie Brown; James Davies; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Lucien Morosan; Sam Brill

Replacements (all used): Josh McKenzie; Jack Lamb; Dane Smith