



## Match Report

Invicta League

Sevenoaks 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 26 v Mustangs XV 41

Played at Knole Paddock, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2014

With several call ups to the 1<sup>st</sup> XV combined with unavailability's this late arranged friendly fixture could have been a potential banana skin, but with the 3<sup>rd</sup> XV league fixture against Canterbury called off by the opposition Coach Weston was able to bolster his resources with a ready supply of volunteers who had been starved of game time in the last month.

On a bright sunny afternoon what turned out to be the best weather of the year so far the match was played on a pitch that was in remarkably good condition given the recent weather. The Mustangs started strongly and early pressure created a penalty opportunity which the returning Jason Smith duly converted. This was followed by a Jack Hart try after good work by both the backs and forwards sucked in the home team's defence, creating the overlap, Jason Smith adding the extras to extend the lead to 10 points.

The play wasn't all one-way and the home team were always dangerous when on the ball and a solid defensive effort was required to keep them at bay. After weathering the Sevenoaks pressure skipper Nick East drove over the line after a catch and drive from a lineout 10m from the Oaks line, with Smith again converting to take the Mustangs into a 17-0 half-time lead.

Sevenoaks came out at the start of the second half with all guns blazing and caught the away team napping and scored two converted tries in quick succession to reduce the deficit.

Realising it was very much 'game on' , Maidstone upped their game with the forwards very much to the fore; some breathing space was created when Paul Hyland broke through the tackling of three defenders to touch down in the corner, with fellow back rower Jamie Sims also touching down shortly after from a push over scrum.

Sevenoaks did hit back and scored an unconverted try with their backs showing some slick handling and great pace, but this was cancelled out when prop Cezar Ionica burst through the home defence to cross with Smith adding the extras.

Despite a win being out of reach, Sevenoaks showed no sign of rolling over as they again demonstrated the threat their young back division poses when they crossed for another converted score.

But it was the Mustang's forwards that held the ascendancy in the final minutes of the match and when a scrum close to the Oaks line started to rumble forward, with the Sevenoaks pack crumbling the referee awarded a penalty try which Sims converted to leave the final score 26-41 to the visitors.