



## Match Report

League - London 3 South East

Maidstone 36 v Folkestone 7

Played at The Mote, Saturday 22 December, 2012

On a pitch suffering from a surfeit of water and with the clouds hanging low over the North Downs, there was some doubt whether the game would get underway. But with a halt in the rain, which lasted for the whole game, Maidstone turned on the power through the forwards and secured a 36-7 victory and with it a bonus point, finishing with a thirteen point margin over their nearest rivals in the league at the halfway stage in the season.



In the conditions, this was never going to be a classic game of rugby but both sides looked to run the ball on every occasion. The difference was in the power of the packs and Maidstone showed no mercy in their approach. Within ten minutes, hooker, Sam Bailey, had posted two tries, both after a catch and drive in the Folkestone 22. And within thirty minutes, Maidstone had built on this early lead to score two further tries to secure the bonus point.

With virtually a full squad available for selection, Danny Baker came back in the front row and Alex Sterzu started in the second row, with Lee Evans providing extra firepower from the bench. Jack Naismith got the nod for the right wing slot with Jason Smith providing the cover, this time.

Maidstone got their first score with barely two minutes on the clock. From the kick off, Folkestone punted the ball wide and the return by Naismith helped set up the Maidstone line out from which Bailey got the touchdown. With Brill slotting the conversion, Maidstone posted a seven point margin with barely a muddy mark on either sides' shirts.





A second try on eight minutes, this time prompted by Morosan's box kick to the corner to establish another lineout position in Folkestone's 22, saw Maidstone increase their lead to twelve points. This time the catch and drive carried a full twenty metres before Bailey went over the line.

The third try was a long distance affair. With Folkestone beginning to find their feet and establishing a presence in the Maidstone 22, strong Maidstone defence secured the ball and with a quick feed to Mark Dorman, his show and go was too slick for the visitor's defence and he ran the length of the field for the third try.

The fourth try came just on the half hour. This time it was Ben Williams that applied the finishing touch from a quick tap penalty after good field position had been established, deep in the Folkestone half.



By this time, it was clear that Maidstone had established dominance up front and, if it hadn't been for the dreadful conditions underfoot, their continuous pressure in the last period before half time would have yielded more points. This is not to imply that Folkestone were in any way conceding the advantage. At every opportunity they ran the ball through both the pack and their threequarters. But, not once did they penetrate the firm Maidstone defence.



The early exchanges of the second half saw both sides running the ball, trying to find a chink in the opposition's defences. And it was Maidstone that found it, with a Morosan inside pass allowing skipper, Ben Williams, to burst through the opposition pack and run in from the 22. Brill added the conversion to stretch the lead to 29 points.

Almost inevitably, the conditions made it increasingly difficult to control the ball and it took another half hour before Maidstone stretched the lead further. With Dorman cooling his heels in the bin for a transgression too far and Folkestone camped on the Maidstone line, a knock on by the visitors presented Ollie Newton with the opening he required to run from his own line to score under the posts. The conversion was a formality.

But Folkestone saved their best to last. With the Maidstone defence stretched, the visitors saw their opportunity to make their mark, and with the final whistle beckoning, hooker, Massey, got the touchdown, half way out. The conversion by Morton put some gloss on the scoreline but this was a solid Maidstone performance that left no doubt about the worth of the victors.



## Maidstone

Ben Williams; Sam Bailey; Danny Baker: James Iles; Alex Sterzu: Richard Parker; Paul Hyland; Matt Iles: Lucien Morosan; Willie Brown: Ollie Newton; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Jack Naismith: Sam Brill

Replacements (All used): Mickael Majcher; Lee Evans; Jason Smith