



Match Report

Mustangs XV 40 v Bexley 1st XV 0

Played at the Mote, Maidstone, Saturday 4th October, 2014

Following Warlingham's withdrawal from the 1st XV's RFU Intermediate Cup fixture, the Mustangs XV were again the focal point of the club's attention, although with no scheduled Invicta League fixture the club had managed to arrange a friendly fixture with Kent Div 1 club Bexley, who were not competing in the RFU Junior Vase.

With injuries to Alex Clark, Jason Smith and Nick Bunyan, plus with Dane Smith unavailable, this was a much changed Mustangs side from last week, but with a midfield back division containing Caleb Van De Westerlo, Willie Brown and Neil Graves certain elements of the line-up had a familiar ring to them; even if it was from last season's 1st XV. Also in the line-up was Jack Davidson, managing to combine some rugby with a social visit to the club.



Despite the day's bright start, the match was played out under a constant downpour, and whilst the ground remained firm underfoot, ball handling as the game progressed became more of a challenge. Against a Bexley side that was solid in the setpiece, particularly the scrum, and with a useful halfback pairing, it was the Mustangs pace and support play that was the real difference between the two sides, with Maidstone's second string prepared to fix their opposite numbers and always looking to offload from the tackle. Were it not for the failed conversions the margin of victory would have been larger.



The home side started brightly and within the first five minutes Willie Brown, in what was his final outing for the club had crossed the opposition line to open the scoring for an early 5-0 lead. Five minutes later his centre partner Graves increased the lead, following a break down the right flank, with the ball quickly fed back to the left with Graves running in close to the posts from the 22m.

The lead was further increased after Van de Westerlo made a good 40m break from his own half, only to be hauled down in the Bexley 22m, quick recycled ball saw Davidson on hand to take the final pass to cross 15m in from the left touchline.

Bexley's defence worked hard to hold out for the next ten minutes, then a good break by Alex Eastwood, coming off the wing made inroads into the Bexley 22m, again quick recycled

ball created the scoring chance as full back Craig Fawcett joined the attacking line on the narrow side to cross from close range to take the score to 20-0 in favour of the hosts. Almost from the restart Maidstone were on the offensive again, a quick tap penalty in midfield saw Jack Lamb make the hard yards before the ball was moved wide to wing David Ruaux to cross in the left corner and complete the scoring for the first half.



The second half followed in much the same vein, although the unrelenting rain was making handling in the greasy conditions somewhat difficult and saw a number of scoring opportunities go begging as the ball slipped out of hands.



It was ten minutes into the half before the next score came, with Brown again opening the scoring, after making the initial break he was on hand again to receive the recycled ball from some good support play and cross under the posts and adding the extras himself to take the lead out to 32-0. Maidstone were unlucky not to have been on the scoresheet again when following a scrum in their

own half van de Westerlo made a solo break to cross in the corner, only to have been adjudged to have had a foot in touch from the last ditch covering tackle by the Bexley winger.

With Brown pulling the strings in the Maidstone back line, another break saw Jack Lamb again make inroads into the Bexley defence before feeding Sam McPherson the scoring pass to touch down under the posts. Maidstone continued to apply pressure against a Bexley side that had defended enthusiastically throughout and had competed hard at the breakdown; and with handling becoming ever more difficult in the conditions, it was a McPherson drop goal that completed the afternoon's scoring to see the Mustangs run out 40-0 winners.



Maidstone: Fox, East, Fitzpatrick, Lee, Murray, Davidson, Huppertz, Lamb, Przemski, Van de Westerlo, Eastwood, Brown, Graves, Ruaux, Fawcett. **Replacements:** Holmes, Day, Austin, McKenzie, McPherson