



## Match Report

Invicta League

Gravesend 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 34 v Mustangs XV 5

Played at Gravesend, Saturday 29th March, 2014

In a fixture postponed from its original date on the 4<sup>th</sup> January and another subsequent postponement due to Gravesend unable to field a side it was a somewhat makeshift Mustangs side that travelled to Gravesend to face a side that they had beaten convincingly in the corresponding fixture earlier in the season.

Call ups to the 1<sup>st</sup> XV and a couple of late unavailability calls meant that the Mustangs fielded a bare 15 players, The side saw debuts for former 4<sup>th</sup> XV skipper Dave Baker, Callum Smith and a return for Tom McMulkin alongside 17yr old Josh Smith plus a number of 3<sup>rd</sup> XV players stepping up a level.

With no replacements this match was always going to be a tough ask with a few veterans in the line-up, but to a man they stuck to their task for the duration. The early exchanges went the way of the Maidstone's with the forwards making inroads into a strong Gravesend defence. However, with the ball Gravesend were able to work their way up the pitch and achieve scoring opportunities. This tended to be the pattern of the first half, despite fly-half Brad Ford's tactical kicking for field position providing opportunities for the Mustangs to clear their lines and put pressure on the Gravesend back three. However Maidstone went into the interval having not troubled the scorer and with a sizeable deficit.

Despite this, there were a number of positives to take from the game, with the Mustangs forwards dominant in the set scrum, driving the Gravesend pack back 20m on a couple of occasions until a G's injury meant they went uncontested and nullified the Mustangs advantage. One such drive led to the Mustangs only score of the match with Paul Hyland crossing from the resultant penalty. Having tightened up their defence in the second period the Mustangs restricted Gravesend to just a single score, despite injury seeing them reduced to 14 for the last quarter of the match

Overall a tough encounter, but played with a lot of pride in the shirt and an impressive debut in adversity by the young Josh Smith.