



Match Report



London & SE Division 1 (South)

Maidstone FC 17 v Chobham RFC 27

Played at The Mote, Saturday 4th November, 2017



Once again, Maidstone disappointed with their first half performance, produced a rousing second half but, finally, conceded a late try and the match. The 17-27 loss to fellow strugglers, Chobham, posed all the same questions as last week: answers to the on field problems were not forthcoming and more confidence drained from the team, with a further tick in the loss column.

But it could have been so different. The second half revival, from a 19-3 half time deficit, to within two points of the visitors, should have been the clarion call to success. But in a stroke of misfortune for Maidstone, injuries to the Chobham front row meant uncontested scrums for the last quarter of the game. This removed Maidstone's one area of obvious superiority and allowed Chobham back into the contest.

Injuries have played havoc with selection this season but it was the unavailability of George Perry, Garry Beck and Josh Pankhurst that required a recall for Euan Caborn at fly half and Max Guero in the front row, with debutant Ryan Murphy slotting in at hooker. Seth Waterworth came in a No 8, after some inspiring performances in the Mustangs, and showed, with some powerful runs that he is a useful addition to the squad.

But the bottom line was that Maidstone lost, showing all the frailties of their earlier games. While a number of player should be returning soon from injury, it may be too late unless the present run of form is overturned.



After heavy overnight rain, the pitch looked wet underfoot but Chobham chose to play a fast passing game and stretched Maidstone from the off. An early scrum delivered the visitors good ball and with a miss-pass in midfield, Chobham released their right wing to the corner. A pass back inside was enough to defeat the cover and full back, Turner was



on hand to score in the corner.

Maidstone elected to play a defensive game at the start and it wasn't until the end of the first quarter that they began to mount attacks in the visitors' half. A resulting 30 metre penalty by Caborn reduced the deficit to two points but a break by prop, Abdoullahi, after the restart, put Chobham on the

front foot once more and centre Williams finished off the move in the right corner.

With Turner converting from the touchline, Chobham stretched their score to 12-3. This was increased within five minutes after a mistake by Maidstone at a line out in the Chobham 22. The ball was spread wide to the left wing, outflanking the Maidstone cover, allowing Devitt to score in the corner.

Another fine conversion from Turner increased the Chobham score to 19-3 with Maidstone in some disarray.

But with Maidstone's forwards gaining momentum, putting the opposing eight under pressure, there was hope of a comeback. Two narrowly missed penalties by Caborn around the half hour would have reflected the pack's dominance but both drifted just wide and Maidstone had to be content with stemming the flow of points up to the break.



Maidstone started the second half with intent. While an early opportunity to pressurise the visitors came to nought, after another error at a line-out, they made amends shortly thereafter, when Matt Moore touched down out wide, after the forwards had battered at the try line. With Caborn adding the conversion, the deficit reduced to nine points with barely ten minutes on the clock.



A quick throw in on the left, after a clearance kick from the visitors, gave Matt Iles the platform to burst through the centre to set up an attacking position deep in the Chobham 22. While Maidstone failed to take advantage this time, the continuous pressure on the Chobham defence eventually yielded its reward.

A succession of five-metre scrums to Maidstone led to a penalty try, just past the quarter hour, bringing them to within a whisker of the visitors' score, with their tails up and the Chobham front row in struggling.

But Chobham found their own second wind



and, rather than Maidstone maintaining their dominance, the visitors started to come back into the game. A forward pass at the last denied them a score and with a third injury to a front row player, the game moved to uncontested scrums with fifteen minutes left on the clock.

It should be noted that this meant that Chobham had to play with a man short for the remainder of the game as a penalty for de-powering the scrum but Maidstone failed to take advantage of this concession.



With the game three minutes into added time, a high tackle gave Chobham the chance to stretch their lead, which Turner duly took from the resultant penalty. And from the restart, Maidstone failed to play safe and allowed left wing, Devitt to break through to set up Turner to score in the right corner, gifting Chobham their four-try bonus and tossing away a losing bonus point at the same time.

This loss was particularly hard to take for the home spectators. After the disappointing first half performance, the resounding comeback promised so much and eventually delivered nothing. It was poor game management that proved Maidstone's real undoing, as it was last week, and until this improves no amount of huff and puff is going to prove enough.

Kieron Gibbons; Ryan Murphy; Max Guero: Rob Field; Ben Massey: Ben Knight; Lewis Stimpson; Seth Waterworth: Lucian Morosan; Euan Caborn: Matt Moore; Matt Iles; Rory Beech; Alex Clark: Jack Leech

Replacements: Tom Mount; Jack Lamb; Vaki Antoniou(All used)

