



Match Report



London & SE Division 1 (South)

Maidstone FC 5 v Chichester RFC 58

Played at The Mote, Saturday 7th April, 2018



On a spring-like day with pitch conditions just right for running rugby, Maidstone found themselves on the end of a heavy 5-58 defeat to a Chichester side who were simply just too good in most aspects of the game.

Despite coming off the back of a heavy loss to Brighton 2 weeks ago, there was still hope in the Maidstone camp that they might cause an unlikely upset, particularly given the way they equipped themselves when they last played Chichester away. However, any doubts that a combination of a long journey and a secured league position at fourth place in the table might give Maidstone a chance to capitalise on some complacency were soon dispelled with 3 converted tries in the first 10 minutes by the visitors.

This meant that game was effectively over for Maidstone and against a side that had superior skill, pace and physicality, it was a case of damage limitation for the remaining 70 minutes. Chichester fed off some early errors by Maidstone and without the ability to make any early in-roads into the Chichester defence, Maidstone never got a foot-hold in the game and were playing 'catch-up' throughout.

However, it was not all one-way traffic. Credit should be given to Maidstone for their 'never say die attitude' and trying to play a wide game despite living off scraps of possession. Maidstone also held their own in the tight and had a period of play in the latter part of the second half where Jack Leech burrowed over for a try, following sustained pressure on the Chichester line and skipper, Knight, was denied a try by the referee, when clearly on the line, having battered the Chichester defence following a line-out catch on the 10m line and a number of pick and goes from the ruck that resulted in 2 penalties. The pressure only being released for Chichester, when a Maidstone player was adjudged to have made a double-movement in contact, which allowed Chichester to kick out of danger.





Ultimately though, Chichester were just too powerful in attack through their off-loading game, support running and ability to find space. The Chichester tries varied in their execution, with a couple of easy 'run-ins' from set piece but the majority came from open play on the Maidstone 22 or from attacks deep in their own half that sliced open a Maidstone defence that struggled to

combat the pace and slick handling on show. In all, the Chichester backs scored all bar one of their 9 tries with 4 going to their scrum-half.

It was encouraging though that the last 5 minutes belonged to Maidstone, and they could have potentially scored a late try if they had been able to ship the ball out quicker but the Chichester cover defence were more than up to the task and snuffed out the Maidstone attack 5m from their line.

With 2 games left, Maidstone still have an opportunity to make an impact before they bow out of this league and affect the fortunes of sides vying for promotion and those hoping to avoid relegation. So, there is still much all to play for beyond finishing the season strongly.



Team

Will Fox; Ryan Murphy; Kieran Gibbons; Adam Knight; Ben Massey, Charlie Williams; Jack Lamb; Lewis Stimpson; Jack Leech; Rory Beech; Lucian Morosan; Matt Isles; Sean Woolford; Josh Smith; Ryan Cropp

Replacements: Max Guerro; Jack Bramwell, Alex Clarke (all used)

