



Match Report



London & SE Division 2 (South East)

Maidstone FC 23 c Horsham RFC 50

Played at The Mote, Saturday 8th September 2018



On what was a warm yet overcast afternoon, Maidstone faced an opening league encounter against a Horsham outfit that finished fourth in this division last season and had managed to bolster their resources over the closed season; and on the basis of this opening day display look likely to be among the promotion contenders this time around.

The result saw Horsham put in a performance that had so often been inflicted on them in encounters past by Maidstone, as the home side failed to cope with the visitors 'all court' game where they made the ball do the work and with pace on the outside were able to exploit opposition weaknesses,

There were four changes to last week's team, all due to work commitments and unavailability's. Tom Varker made his first start for the club replacing Will Fox and playing out of position put in a performance that was to earn him the man of the match accolade. . Ben Massey returned to partner Charlie Bentley with and Charlie Williams moving into a re-shuffled back-row with Seth Waterworth and Jordan Amos both unavailable. Changes in the backline saw Shaun Woolford in the centre for Olly Newton who dropped to the bench, whilst youngster Ollie Jenkins started on the wing for the unavailable Antoniou. Jack Bramwell and new recruit Jamie Marzetti completed the bench.

Maidstone started brightly enough and an early Caborn penalty attempt narrowly drifted to the left of the uprights, but it was Horsham who were first to trouble the scorers when from a lineout on the Maidstone 10m they moved the ball left with winger Nwachukwu, who was to pose a threat throughout, able to outpace the covering defence to cross in the corner. Johnson was unable to add the extras.

Despite the early loss through injury of prop Gilligan, much of the first quarter was played in midfield and Maidstone looked to be beginning to get into their





stride as breaks by Smith and Iles took them into the Horsham 22m and a resultant Caborn penalty reduced the arrears to 3-5. The half turned early in the second quarter when with Maidstone under pressure in their own 22m, Massey was yellow carded for a cynical penalty; with the home side still deep in their own territory and a man down the pressure told when No8 Tredgett

(M) was able to drive over from close range on the half hour, Johnson added the extras for a 3-12 advantage.

A Caborn penalty 5 minutes later reduced the deficit but two Horsham tries in quick succession in the closing minutes of the half garnered a bonus point and looked to have put the game out of reach. The first was probably the pick of the afternoon's scores as Horsham stole a lineout on their own 22m and with a good forward drive able to create the momentum, with the ball then moved left through the backs it inevitably ended in the hands of Nwachukwu who took advantage of some weak tackling to cross midway out, Johnson added the conversion. Kicker Johnson was instrumental in the next try when good recycled ball saw a Johnson break, and although hauled down short of the line, skipper Tredgett (R) was on hand to receive the pop pass and dot down, the conversion was missed but the visitors held a 6-24 lead at the interval.



With Newton introduced at the interval Maidstone were quick apply pressure in the Horsham 22m in the opening minutes of the second half and looked most likely to score when an intercept by Johnson saw him almost reach the line before Maidstone managed to haul him down, but with the home defence still recovering the supporting flanker Everitt was able to pick up and cross

by the posts, with the conversion a formality the visitors now had a 6-31 lead.

Maidstone continued to apply pressure as they looked to take something out of the match, and midway through the quarter a loose poor clearance kick was field by Smith who fed Clark to run back at the Horsham defence. Some good interplay eventually saw the ball with Newton who still had work to do as he crossed 15m in on the left to reduce the deficit to 11-31.

Horsham then looked to be taking control and as the game entered the final quarter it was again two tries in quick succession that killed any hopes of a home side revival. The first from a scrum in left field that saw the ball moved through the hands quickly with fullback Bell joining the line to cross. The second almost immediately from the restart as from a midfield ruck the scrum half took advantage of a gap around the fringe to turn the defence, with winger Nwachukwu on hand to take the final pass and complete his hat trick.

Maidstone's own response to this setback was itself almost immediate as from a penalty they set up field position deep in the left corner; the resultant lineout taken by Lamb set up the catch & drive with hooker Murphy getting the touchdown, Caborn added the extras.



A Blake try for Horsham took them to the half century but it was Maidstone that had the last say of the afternoon's exchanges when from a penalty lineout on the right touchline good drives in midfield by Bentley and Bramwell fixed the visiting defence for the ball to be moved left, with Newton showing enough strength to hold off two tacklers and cross midway out from the posts, Caborn added the extras with what was the final act of the match and a disappointing 23-50 defeat.



In summary, Maidstone will look on this result as a wakeup call to the standard of play in this division, whilst Horsham are one of the better sides Maidstone will need to look again at the penalty count and also their tackling, far too often missed tackles left a dangerous opposition back division with the extra man and the pace to exploit it. That said, there were positives, their lineout largely functioned well and the scrum generally held up to a serious examination, but nevertheless plenty still to work on.

Maidstone Tom Varker; Ryan Murphy; Ashley Gilligan; Ben Massey; Charlie Bentley; Charlie Williams; Jack Lamb; Matt Iles; Lucian Morosan; Jack Leech; Josh Smith; Shaun Woolford; Alex Clark; Ollie Jenkins; Euan Caborn;
Replacements: Olly Newton; Jack Bramwell; Jamie Marzetti (All used)

