



## Match Report



### London 2 (South East)

Beckenham RFC 55 v Maidstone FC 3

Played at Beckenham, Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Maidstone came against a powerful and skillful side, who deserve to be at the top of the league but despite the score line, it was by no means one-way traffic. With much to work on following the last few week's disappointing performances, Maidstone showed that they had improved in most areas against a very good team in wet and rainy conditions. All put in a better shift, fronted up to their much larger pack and played with a sense of purpose and determination right up to the final whistle.

The lineout overall functioned well, the scrum was more secure and the backs played with width and confidence. In addition, defensively, they put in some big hits and continually knocked down their big ball carriers and there was better discipline at the break-down. As usual, there were a number of changes due to unavailability and injury, which meant a re-shuffle in the backs and changes in the pack and credit, needs to go to those who stepped up and made an impact.

What also needs to be taken into account is that whilst Beckenham ran in some well-constructed tries, they were also gifted at least 4 tries from mistakes made by Maidstone and indeed it was their ability to take chances when they presented themselves and clinical finishing in slippery conditions that was the key difference between the two teams.

Unlike previous weeks, Maidstone started brightly taking the game to Beckenham putting early pressure on their defence in their 22, which led to an offside and allowed Perry to slot the 3 points from the penalty. Unfortunately, these were the only points Maidstone would get, having squandered opportunities of their own, particularly in the first half, when Beckenham had a player binned, coupled with some baffling refereeing decisions that went against them whilst in attack and 'red zone' positions.

Beckenham responded well and it was a catch and drive from their much larger pack that Maidstone were unable to stop that led to their first try. The second came from a break out by their big lock that produced a deft offload to their scrum half at pace, who then sprinted 50m to score an individual try that was duly converted. A dropped pass, whilst Maidstone were in attack led to the next try, which was picked up and went through a number of hands for a score on the left hand wing.

A knock on by Maidstone in defence led to a bonus point try from a powerful Beckenham scrum and it was a fortuitous follow up from a high ball that bounced off the Maidstone fullback into the competing Beckenham player that led to a converted score in the left hand corner to finish the half 3-29.

With the weather worsening, Maidstone came out for the second half full of intent and for the first 20 minutes, there was little difference between





the two sides. Maidstone made some inroads into the Beckenham defence, using their runners to good effect, securing good ball at set piece and in the loose to move the ball wide. However, the Beckenham defence although stretched at times, kept Maidstone at bay. It was not until Beckenham were able get good field position that they forced a knock on in the Maidstone defence that led to a Beckenham scrum on the 10m line, which initially repelled was eventually scored following a number of pick and goes. The next score was a push over try and there were further scores by the Beckenham lock and some slick handling between forwards and backs that led to the last try.

The result to some extent is irrelevant, particularly in a game that Maidstone were never expected to win given their relative league positions but what it has done has given them much needed momentum going into next week's (and the last of the 2018 campaign) game against a Thanet side that Maidstone beat away from home in the early part of the season. Much of the outcome of this game will be dependent on making sure that all put in a hard weeks training and building on the foundations of this performance against a confident and very able top of the table side, who by no means had their own way all afternoon.

**Maidstone:** Fox; Varker; Gilligan; Williams; Chandler; Bramwell; Weston Marzetti; Morosan; Clark; Woolford; Newton; Hill; De Zoeten; Perry.

**Replacements:** Maytum; Smith; Charlton (all used).

