



## Match Report



### London 2 (South East)

Old Colfeian RFC 52 v Maidstone FC 7

Played at Horn Park Saturday 9th February 2019

Despite the heavy loss, results else-where in the league mean that Maidstone will once again ply their trade in London 2 SE next season. However, no team likes to lose and this was no different for Maidstone although truth be told this was a game that Maidstone were never expected to win, particularly given the home result last time out. The only hope was that Old Colfeians (OCs) might have rested a number of key players ahead of their preparations next week against Letchworth in the SE Divisional Final of the RFU Intermediate Cup. Unfortunately, this was not the case and whilst Maidstone found it a very hard, if not educational encounter in how to play simple yet effective rugby, Maidstone at least provided a good work out that should set OCs up nicely against Letchworth and we wish them well.

Overall, OC's were just too big, strong and powerful with real pace to burn outside and despite some heroic defence for 25 minutes in the second half and another well taken try for Josh Smith, Maidstone struggled to contain a well-drilled, clinical OCs side all afternoon, who out-gunned the Maidstone pack in terms of weight and height by a considerable margin.

Playing into a strong wind in the first half, Maidstone had parity in the early exchanges but with the OCs forwards starting to make in-roads, it took just 5 minutes for OCs to run in to score from possession built up outside the Maidstone 22 that stretched the defence and put an ominous marker down for the rest of the afternoon. The next try came from a line-out that Maidstone initially defended well but was re-cycled quickly and spread wide for a converted score under the posts.

Maidstone found it increasingly difficult to win the ball and with penalties mounting up and with the wind at their backs, OCs were able to gain good field position and with increased ascendancy in the scrum, Maidstone were constantly under the proverbial cosh and on the 30 min mark, a well worked move off the base of the scrum allowed 14, to jink through and score under the posts for another converted score.

Two further scores came, the best of which was superb linking between the 2 pacey OCs wingers for 14 to pick his second score. The last of the half came from a line-out fed to the OC's 13 on the cut to run in under the posts. The half ended with a 40-0 deficit and thoughts of a cricket score if OC's could maintain the same game plan in the second half but to Maidstone's credit, this was not the case and if anything the second half belonged to Maidstone for their grit, determination, team work ethic and 'never say die' attitude in keeping OCs down to just 19 further points and returning with 7 of their own.

For much of second half, OCs battered the Maidstone defence, using their big runners, who were looking to off-load at every opportunity. This was hampered by a yellow card to Josh Smith for a high tackle early in the half. Maidstone were defiant to a man but inevitably the power of OCs proved too much with a drive off the scrum and re-cycled ball leading to another score. Another try soon followed from a break by OCs in open





plan to score under the posts. A re-shuffle in the Maidstone back-line brought Josh Smith into the centre and he used his trade-mark high leg drive and body swerve to burst through a bewildered OCs defence from his 22 to score under the posts. OCs, however had the last word and the game finished with another try from loose play against a tired Maidstone defence.

In summary, OCs were just too good all round against a young, inexperienced but developing Maidstone side that was missing some key players on the day and in a team that included only 4 players from last season's encounter, when they beat OC's on the last weekend of the 2017/18 season. However, far from being down-beat, there are a number of positives. Maidstone have secured their league status, which a month ago was in serious doubt and they now have a group of players who are going to get better and better, the more they play together and flourish under the new coaching structure and it is games like this, however painful at the time that they will learn from and improve as a result. In addition, the line out functioned well, the forwards repelled the formidable OCs catch and drive, the backs looked to move the ball wide effectively when the opportunity allowed and each week they are scoring well-constructed tries.

Maidstone are by no means the finished article but a side in transition, whilst OCs are a side that are developed and that is probably the key factor in the nature of the score line, which I suspect will be a lot closer when the 2 sides meet next season. It was also good to see the youngsters step up to this level with some good forward performances from the likes of Chandler et al and for debutant, John Carfray to be 'blooded' (although not literally). Maidstone are now looking at the final 3 league weeks of the season, with the pressure off, to finish with confidence as they re-build for next season's campaign.

Maidstone: Fox; Murphy; Gilligan; Lee,; Chandler, Fisher; Weston; Williams; Morosan ©; Clark; Lane; De Zoeten; Smith; Grice; Jenkins

Replacements: Carfray; Varker; Kew

