



Match Report



London & SE Division 2 (South East)

Thanet Wanderers RFC 18 v Maidstone FC 22

Played at St Peters, Broadstairs, Saturday 15th September 2018



On a dry Autumnal day Maidstone recorded their first league win of the season away at Thanet.

Injury and unavailability saw several changes to the side that took the field last week, with the forwards particularly affected; Aran Sage made a debut start in the front row alongside Ryan Murphy, with Jack Bramwell occupying the other front row berth and veteran Richard Gray providing cover from the bench. The second row as unchanged and a youthful back row of Jordan Amos, Jamie Marzetti and Sam Weston completed the pack. The backline saw Mikey Grice in at scrum-half for absent kipper Morosan whilst vaki Antoniou returned on the wing with George Perry filling the full back position

Playing up the hill in the first period, it was the away side that opened the scoring in the second minute of the game as centre Sean Woolford scored in the corner after a backline attack following a solid scrum which allowed Number 8 Sam Weston to have his first sortie of the afternoon at the Thanet defence.

The game ebbed and flowed between the 22s and Thanet were awarded a penalty in the Maidstone half for ill-discipline at the breakdown. This was successfully converted. 3-5 after seven minutes.

Maidstone with debutant prop Sage on the tight head with Murphy and Bramwell completing the front row trio, had the early ascendancy in the tight giving a solid platform that allowed the backs to make inroads into the Thanet half, final passes not always going to hand and the Thanet defence cutting down space holding firm.



The first change of the afternoon was on 14 minutes when Charlie Wil-



liams replaced the injured Ben Massey, the Maidstone backs continued to attack with good breaks from centres Woolford and Clark.

Number 8 Weston picked up a leg injury and was replaced by veteran prop Richard Gray, this caused a pack reshuffle with Gray packing down on the loose head and Bramwell moving to

the flank.

Mid way through the second quarter a Thanet attack down the left flank saw them score in the corner following some good interchanges which questioned the Maidstone defence, the conversion was missed but the home side had moved into an 8-5 lead

Maidstone responded with an attack of their own down their left hand side, excellent handling by Bramwell put fullback George Perry in space who made good inroads into the Thanet 22 and was finally tackled into touch.



As the half concluded Maidstone continued to attack and following a 5 metre scrum, impressive back row Jamie Marzetti packing down at number 8 picked and drove towards the open side to score with Perry adding the extras, taking the score at the interval to 8-12 in the visitors favour.

The start of the second half saw an early Thanet attack into the Maidstone 22m, with the visitors adjudged to have offended at a 5 metre scrum the home side took the opportunity to reduce the deficit to 11-12 with a converted penalty; although Maidstone again opened the gap after Thanet were penalised for an infringement at the breakdown just inside their own half allowing Perry to extend the lead to 11-15 with a long range kick.

Maidstone replaced winger Josh Smith with Vaki Antoniou and soon after his arrival he was on hand as the ball was moved quickly wide with Woolford and Clark combining to release fullback Perry who had joined the line and in turn released the unmarked Antoniou. Although hauled down ten metres short of Thanet tryline, the ball was recycled quickly with scrum half Mikey Grice offloading to Flanker Amos who with quick footwork beat two defenders to score just to the right of the posts, Perry added the extras to take the score out to 11-22.

To Thanet's credit and in front of a large, loud partisan crowd they continued to pressure the Maidstone line and they finally scored a converted try through forward tenacity to set up a tense final few minutes.

Maidstone took the game to Thanet with Smith returning for Woodford and Sage on for Murphy. Maidstone's game management came to the

fore as they retained possession and ran the clock down, with fly half Leach kicking the ball into touch to conclude proceedings for hard worked win on the road for Maidstone

In conclusion Maidstone will be happy with the win away from home and the positives of the performance of the scrum which was solid for the majority of the game allowing the well balanced back row of Marzetti, Amos and Weston to work well together in attack and link with the backs.

Maidstone Aran Sage; Ryan Murphy; Jack Bramwell; Ben Massey; Charlie Bentley; Jamie Marzetti ; Jordan Amos; Sam Weston; Mikey Grice; Jack Leech; Josh Smith; Shaun Woolford; Alex Clark; Vaki Antoniou; George Perry;

Replacements: Ollie Jenkins; Richard Gray, Charlie Williams (All used)

