



## Match Report



### London & SE Division 2 (South East)

Maidstone FC 15 v Dover RFC 8

Played at The Mote, Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018



On the final day of last season, these two already relegated sides played one another and Maidstone came home from Horn Park with a consolation win to mark the end of their 3 year stint in London 1 South.

The intervening period has clearly been kinder to Colfes than to Maidstone in terms of recruitment or retention and without some of the big hitters that played for Maidstone in last year's fixture, Maidstone were outmuscled and bullied by a big pack that sapped the best defensive efforts of the home side, leaving gaps that could be easily exploited by a set of backs that were well organised and quick.

This disparity in muscle was compounded by the home side tending to put themselves under needless pressure at times and also repeatedly, to kick-hard-won possession straight back to the gleeful Colfes back-three, who accepted the early Christmas gifts gratefully.

It was just such a passage that led to the Colfes opening 3 points with less than 2 minutes on the clock. From the kick-off Maidstone's clearance kick was charged down and suddenly Colfes were in possession with a ruck formed 20m out from the Maidstone posts. With the ball at the back of the ruck and no Colfe on hand to play the ball, Skipper Morosan stepped round to take the ball but was judged, rather harshly perhaps, to be offside and an easy kick was taken for the first score.



Further self-inflicted pressure came when Maidstone's re-start kick went straight





into touch and the resultant scrum on the half-way line led to a clinically executed try that brought the score to 0-10 with only 5 minutes on the clock and already the game looking as though it were no longer a contest but merely an exercise in damage limitation.

That said, the home defence rallied and despite being under severe pressure in the scrum, no further score came till the 25 minute mark when after a pounding from the Colfes forwards, the ball was spun wide for an unconverted try in the corner 0-15.

On 35 minutes, a penalty against Maidstone in the scrum gave Colfes a lineout in the corner which was well defended by Maidstone but Ben Massey was judged to have collapsed the maul and was yellow-carded amidst howls of protest from the Maidstone technical area. Weakened by the removal of Maidstone's most experienced player, the score from the catch and drive became inevitable, 0-20.



On 36 minutes, Ashley Gilligan was brought into the front-row which helped to stabilise the scrum but even on Maidstone's put-in, No8

Sam Weston was still having to work extremely hard to retrieve any good ball from a retreating platform, for which heroics he received Maidstone's MotM award. Fortunately, the Maidstone line-out functioned well again, with Tom Chandler and Jamie Marzetti securing most of their own ball.

Two more 7 pointers were conceded on 40 minutes and 42 minutes, one from an aimless box-kick and one from losing possession in attack, bringing the half-time score to 0-34 and the prospect of a rampant Colfeians attacking down the slope in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.

However, the Maidstone team clearly had no intention of being humiliated for a 2<sup>nd</sup> successive week and began to



put together some good passages of play based on keeping possession and quick recycling rather than kicking back to the Colfes defence.

Fly-half Ollie Newton took an interception on the half way line and after a strong run, (which was char-

acteristic of his performance all afternoon) was brought down by a high tackle for which a yellow-card was brandished. From the subsequent penalty, Ashley Gilligan was able to dive over for Maidstone's solitary consolation score of the afternoon, 5-34.



This was more than nullified when in trying to run out of their own 22, Maidstone were caught in possession and the Colfes scrum-half was able to pick-up the loose ball and scamper under the post for 7 points, 5-41.

There then followed Maidstone's best passage of play as they defended the notorious North-East corner when it seemed that the Colfes forwards must score, before breaking out and moving the ball through 30 or 40 passes and within 10m of the Colfes try-line, although the attack finally faltered before Colfes broke out once again to add a further 7 points on 33 minutes, 5-48.

It was rather cruel that in extra time, a final 5 points was conceded to breach the 50 point mark but the 2<sup>nd</sup> half had shown a clear improvement in tactics and execution and the excellent attitude of the team was exemplified by the sight of Scott De Zoeten and Vaki amongst others, sprinting flat-out to try to charge down the conversion and limit the damage on what was of course by then a completely lost cause.

**Maidstone:** Will Fox; Ryan Murphy; Ashley Gilligan; Tom Chandler; Ben Massey ©; Jordan Amos, Jamie Marzetti; Sam Weston; Lucian Morosan; Ollie Newton; George Perry; Shaun Woolford; Vaki Antoniou; Will Lane; Scott de Zoeten; .

Replacements: Tom Varker; Jack Bramwell; Jack Lamb (all used).

