

Late Red Veterans Trophy

Maidstone 19 Sevenoaks 0

In the opening game of the new competition Maidstone showed they were serious about winning the trophy with a convincing win against old rivals Sevenoaks. A number of the players had been to Twickenham the day before for an early training session in the bars, but inevitably this had an adverse effect on their performance in the first ten minutes. Brothers Shaun and Dave Charlton took a while to get into gear. They were sweating Guinness for the first 20 minutes and the ball was flying everywhere. However, once out of the system, their innate rugby skills kicked in and Maidstone were up and running.

John O'Brien opened the scoring following some good interplay between backs and forwards, with DC adding the extras with a rare successful kick. Maidstone dominated possession, with the forwards driving well, but Sevenoaks were dogged in defence and did manage the odd excursion into the Maidstone half. A scrum in the Oaks 22 saw Maidstone's monster pack win clean ball for the backs, followed by a Charlton half break and good hands from a lithe Martin Arnold put Ian Howson in for Maidstone's second try. Despite this, Sevenoaks refused to bow, and should have scored on the stroke of half time but for a text book last ditch tackle by second rower Richard Ewence, playing against his old club.

Half time arrived and Matt Plowman managed to turn up just in time for the first scrummage of the second half, which was actually quite early for him. Maidstone again dominated most of the possession and territory without adding to the score board, with Sevenoaks never really threatening but a score would make it interesting. However, Sevenoaks contributed to their own downfall with an ill directed cross kick going straight to right wing Stu Bates, who not only caught it cleanly but showed a clean pair of heels to the Sevenoaks cover and scorched over from the 10m line. Game over, with Lauro slotting the two points. Sevenoaks did galvanise themselves and had a sustained period of pick and drive which almost gave them a score, but Maidstone's defence remained sound. The half was epitomised by the number of hamstring injuries incurred by Maidstone-3 is the official count. First John O'Brien following a break up the middle; similarly Martin Arnold, with tongue wagging; then Shaun Charlton. We are looking for more physios for future games.

The final play of the game saw quick thinking by Darren Banfield smash a quickly taken 22m kick up the field for Howson the chase. He kicked on and in trying to pick up the ball knocked on with the try line begging. Luckily he saw the funny side and everyone else watched from inside the 22.

A solid win all in all, but the team will need to be a lot more clinical in their coming games.

Well done to the whole squad and special thanks to the physio Gemma , Roger the water boy and the fantastic bar staff.

MOM Richard Ewence for a great first half and for not allowing Blackheath to enter the competition.

Many thanks to Sevenoaks for their spirit and sportsmanship.