



## Match Report



London Division 2 (South East)

Maidstone FC 65 v Old Colfeians RFC 17

Played at The Mote, Maidstone, Saturday 1st Nov, 2014



Maidstone enjoyed comprehensive victories in the two fixtures against Old Colfeians last season and this encounter proved no different, with the home sides 11 try demolition of the Eltham based club maintaining their 100% record as they moved to the top of the division with a game in hand.

With the delayed autumnal weather and the pitch being in good condition, the conditions meant that the possibility of another weekend of expansive, high tempo running rugby were in prospect and the potential for a more forward orientated game further delayed.

Although last week's battle with Sevenoaks had left its mark, Head Coach Paul Hathaway's only changes to the team were in the forwards; with Luke Debnam starting at tight-head prop and Joel Byford moving to the bench. Ian Lee came into the 2nd Row alongside James Iles, with Matt Iles moving to the No 8 berth replacing Ben Brill, Damien Grab occupied the blindside flank for the unavailable Matt Davies. The replacements bench saw a welcome return for club stalwart Jack Lamb alongside James Douglas and Byford.



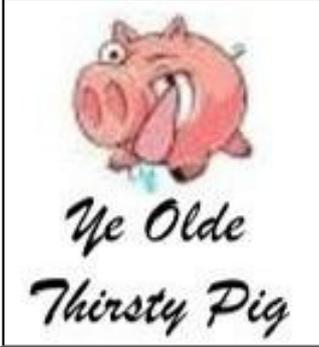
Previous weeks have seen Maidstone quick out of the blocks and posting rapid early match scores, for this encounter there was a slightly more measured approach as the home side received the kick off and then looked to pen Colfes back through a kick for territory. The opening ten minutes saw the game played in midfield with Colfes having the lion's share of possession; the combination of Maidstone's oppressive defence and Colfes lack of penetrative running saw Maidstone open the scoring. Turnover ball on their own 22m created the opportunity for Jamie Perigo and Lucien Morosan to create the attacking opening down the left flank, with Sam McPherson on hand for the last pass to touch down under the posts. Nick Childs added the extras and the home side had set the scoreboard into a motion that was to tick over at regular intervals throughout the first half.



Three minutes later and another turnover with Perigo, who was to pick up the Man of the Match award for his efforts, was again the architect of



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the midfield break, this time down the right flank to feed Josh Pankhurst, and with Nick Childs joining the line from fullback Childs joining the line for a simple run in to touch down and extras to give the home side an early 14-0 lead and an indication of what was to come.

Maidstone closed out the quarter with another score as a Jonno Skelton kick was misfielded by the Colfes fullback Courtneidge to give Maidstone the attacking platform. Skelton was hauled down just short of the line, but the supporting Maidstone pack maintained their patience with winger Morosan eventually getting the touchdown at the base of a driving maul.

Maidstone had secured the four-try bonus point by the twenty fifth minute following a initial midfield break by 2nd Row James Iles, with Eddie Cranston and Morosan showing some good interplay for the latter to score under the posts, Childs added the two points for a 26-0 lead.



Maidstone were by now the dominant force in the match and it was only some poor execution and a lack of accuracy that prevented them posting further scores, although on the stroke of half-time Colfes demonstrated their ability to counter attack as with Maidstone pressing the ball was stolen close to the Colfes left touchline and winger Berridge was able to sprint clear to run in under the posts from 70m, with Courtneidge adding the extras to take the score to 26-7 at the interval.

If the game appeared to have been won by half-time, stern words from coach Paul Hathaway maintained the impetus in the early stages of the second half as a succession of rapid scores early in the second period put the home side out of sight and any hopes of a Colfes comeback beyond reach. The first came from right wing Alex Eastwood who scored in the corner following good work by Cranston and Lenny VanderVelde. Two minutes later VanderVelde was in under the posts following an intercepted pass as Colfes attempted to run out of defence, with Childs converting the try Maidstone were showing a healthy 38-7 lead.

The restart saw James Douglas on at fullback for Childs, and straight from the kick-off a 50m break by Morosan saw him link with VanderVelde who fed Cranston to cross in the left corner to take the score to 43-7; at which point coach Hathaway made further changes with Jack Lamb on for Damien Grab and Byford on for Pankhurst, with back rower Cranston moving into the hooker berth.

A poor Colfes restart gave the home side the opportunity to build pressure from a mid-field scrum, and they extended their lead following some good handling which had been a hallmark of the Maidstone play and saw VanderVelde over in the left corner for his second score.

Maidstone posted the half century following a good break by Lamb, supported by Perigo, quick recycling of the ball saw it moved left with fullback Douglas able to dive over in the corner, Perigo added the extras with a difficult conversion from the touchline.



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The momentum of the game shifted slightly early in the last quarter, as Lamb was yellow-carded for a late tackle and Colfes looked to utilise the man advantage by penning the home side in their own 22m and employing the catch and drive from the line out. A period of concerted pressure saw their efforts rewarded as they were able to eventually drive over with Adnitt getting the score.

With bonus points at stake there is always something to play for and Colfes continued to press for further tries and midway through the final quarter Colfes managed to put together their best passage of play, with some good possession and movement of the ball seeing Berridge cross 10m in from the right touchline for Colfe's third try and reduce the deficit to 55-17.

The previous week Maidstone had creaked with the opposition looking for the fourth score, but with Lamb back on the pitch, normal service was restored, with Cranston crossing in the right corner following a break by VanderVelde and then a similar break saw Perigo in to round off the afternoons scoring in the closing minutes for a 65-17 win.

In summary, after last week's tight battle against Sevenoaks, Maidstone were back close to their best, and whilst it would be easy having scored nine tries for the back division to take all the plaudits, but given the high tempo game that Maidstone play, it is the support work and supply of quick ball that the forwards provide that creates this platform. This was however, by no means a complete performance, despite the obvious highlights and a convincing results, the players realise that there were further scores that with an improved level of accuracy of execution would have been completed.

However, Maidstone can go into next week's RFU Intermediate Cup clash with London 2(NW) leaders Harrow, knowing that their game is beginning to come together.

**Maidstone:** Williams (C), Pankhurst, Debnam, Iles J, Lee, Grab, Cranston, Iles M, McPherson Skelton, Morosan, Perigo, Van der Velde, Eastwood, Childs. **Replacements:** (All Used) Byford, Lamb, Douglas

