



## Match Report

### Invicta League

#### Sidcup 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 31 v Mustangs XV 29

Played at Crescent Farm, Sidcup, Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2014

This outing against Sidcup is likely to be the Mustangs last outing this season, with the side highly likely to forfeit their final fixture in favour of travelling to support the 1<sup>st</sup> XV in their promotion playoff at Gosport. As has been the way of things recently, injuries and unavailability's saw a Mustangs XV featuring eight players turning out for the side for the first time this season.

Inspirational skipper Nick East returned from injury to lead his team out and as usual produced a physical and dynamic performance around the park. The side also featured Josh Pankhurst and Joel Byford, both returning to senior squad availability after work commitments saw them unavailable for a month.

Sidcup, took the early lead as they came out of the blocks with all guns blazing in the early exchanges and began to find holes in the Mustangs defence and it wasn't long before they had stretched to a 26 point advantage with the Mustangs only reply a Josh Pankhurst solo try that kept the visitors in the contest. With a somewhat makeshift side it would have been easy for heads to drop at this stage but a half-time team talk from Coach Richard Weston saw a few tweaks to the style and playing patterns and the Mustangs looked a different outfit after the break.

In what was likely to be the last 40 minutes of a long season a fightback was on the cards; Martin Maytum was first to crash over following some great team play which saw every Mustangs player touching the ball in the build-up, Duncan McIntock added the extras. , Youngster Josh Smith, showing great maturity running the ball back from a kick making inroads into the Sidcup defence and with the ball effectively recycled through another couple of phases Joel Byford crossed the for another Mustangs score to further reduce the deficit.

At 26-17 to Sidcup was as a comeback on the cards? Pankhurst got his second try and with his strong running was almost breaking the Sidcup line at will, and it was one of these strong runs that saw him touch down under the posts, leaving a simple conversion for McIntock. On what was now a rare Sidcup break into the Maidstone half and the home side found a gap out wide to touchdown for an unconverted try and restore a points buffer.

With the clock ticking down, some solid defending from Sidcup kept out a barrage of Mustangs attacks, in the end the pressure told with flanker Ben Rookledge picking up from

the base of the ruck to dart over for the score with the last play of the match. With the conversion attempt to draw the match drifting wide of the posts the final score sat at 31-29 to Sidcup in what had very much been a game of two halves with a pulsating and exciting finale that saw spectators drifting across to watch the battle unfold, rather than their 1<sup>st</sup> XV put 45 points on Cobham in their final league encounter.