



Match Report

League - London 3 South East

Park House 15 v Maidstone 42

Played at Park House, Saturday 3 November, 2012

Winning this game by 42 -15 put Maidstone on top of the league. But the style of the victory left much to be desired and only in the last twenty minutes did they subdue their opponents and begin to play the open rugby that should have been their choice from the outset.

On paper, this should have been an easy win with Park House still to post a victory in the league. But they refused to be intimidated by comparative positions and found the soft underbelly of a Maidstone pack that was not at its best. Only when Lee Evans, starting the game on the replacements bench, came on at the end of the first half did a semblance of nous, regarding how to counter the rolling maul, enter the lexicon of Maidstone plays.

Park House may have had limited capabilities but once they perceived that playing a tight game made life so uncomfortable for the visitors, they returned to it, time and again, like a DJ with a No 1 Christmas single. The catch and drive from the line out may not be pretty to watch but with Maidstone falling foul of the referee too often, they gave their hosts increasing opportunities to inflict pain on the Maidstone eight.



After last week's win over Ashford, there were a number of forced changes to the Maidstone starting line up with the pack having a more callow look, with James Iles and Alex Hadi starting in the second row and Josh McKenzie taking over the hooking role, with Jack Lamb making a return to the starting lineup on the flank. Debutant, Jack Naismith, came in on the right wing, with Lucian Morosan moving to the left and James Davies at full back. Prompted by the antipodean half back pairing of Ivan Walkling and Willie Brown, there was plenty of pace and invention behind the scrum that should have secured this game early on.



With a commanding start, which saw the Maidstone pack retain possession for almost five minutes, the first score came with ten minutes on the clock. From a line out on the Maidstone 22, the ball was quickly moved along the line for Mark Dorman to make the break and receive a return pass from Jack Naismith to outstrip the defence. With the conversion from the touchline by Morosan, the seven point margin emphasised the route to success.

A second try, this time by No 8, Matt Iles, just past the quarter, after a break though the centre by Neil Graves emphasised Maidstone's superiority outside the scrum. But from this

point until half time, Park House became the dominant force, slowing the play and using their own bulky pack to control the ball in the tight and not let Maidstone play to their strengths.



Two pushover tries by Park House, one on 23 minutes and a second on 34 minutes, cut the dash from Maidstone's play and with Danny Baker receiving a yellow card in time added on, the half time whistle came as some relief to the visitors, albeit with a slender two point lead.

Any sense of satisfaction was quickly dispelled at the start of the second half, when Park House claimed their third try from a rolling maul, setting up a three point lead, after only three minutes. But from here on, Maidstone's began to find their game, firstly countering the rolling maul, with Danny Baker restored to play and a strong defence outside the pack unsettling Park House when they elected to move the ball wide.



Maidstone's lead was restored after eight minutes of the half, with Paul Hyland taking the scoring pass after a decisive break in the centre by Lee Evans, with a second Evans' break setting up skipper Ben Williams for a try shortly thereafter.

A second try by Dorman just before the half hour saw Maidstone ease away from the danger zone and a further try, to secure his hat-trick, along with a penalty by Willie Brown

plus a second try for Matt Iles, at the death, bolstered the final scoreline to 42-15. But this did scant justice to the Park House contribution to the game, which had raised fluttering of misgivings in the breasts of all the Maidstone supporters at the game.



A final thought: isn't it time a reliable kicker was identified for the team. Sixteen potential extra points were thrown away in this game by poor place kicking. While it didn't matter on this occasion, there will be closer encounters where winning or losing depends on converted kicks.

Maidstone

Ben Williams; Josh McKenzie; Danny Baker: James Iles; Alex Hadi; Richard Parker; Jack Lamb; Matt Iles; Ivan Walking; Willie Brown: Jack Naismith; Neil Graves; Mark Dorman; Lucien Morosan: James Davies

Replacements: Lee Evans; Paul Hyland; Mickael Majcher