



Match Report

Kent RFU Invicta League

Division 1

Maidstone Mustangs XV 12 v Medway RFC 2nd XV 16

Played at The Mote, Saturday 23 January, 2016

The Mustangs good start to 2016 came to an end against local rivals Medway, when despite having control for the majority of the game, an error in midfield presented Medway the only scoring chance they were able to convert all afternoon, to steal a 12-16 win in the closing stages.

Despite the bright sunshine, on a heavy cloying pitch it was never going to be a spectacle of running rugby, although both sides did their best in the conditions sticking doggedly to their tasks. Maidstone's day had started with disruption with the late withdrawal of both props and another pack member and the call up to the 1st XV of scrum half Seb Corby.

Although the home side started brightly with a makeshift front row their set scrum was always under pressure although in compensation they experienced dominance in the line out for large parts of the match. However, it was the visitors that were first on the scoreboard with a penalty towards the end of the first quarter calmly converted by fly-half Orris. Whilst the home side held the ascendancy for much of the half it wasn't until the half hour after a period of sustained pressure in the Medway 22m that 2nd row Charlie Williams cut a good line to breach the Medway defence to touch down under the posts with Cam Laurenson adding the extras. A further Orris penalty for Medway reduced the deficit despite Maidstone dominating most of proceedings and new arrival Rob Field who had a fine game in difficult conditions at the base of the scrum was unlucky to have a try ruled out in the closing minutes with the referee being unsighted for the grounding of the ball.

With a slender one point margin at the interval, the home side picked up where they closed out the first half, exerting a period of pressure on the Medway line, eventually leading to a try as flanker Richie Bowen burrowed over from the base of a ruck wide on the left to extend the lead to 12-6. Much of the remainder of the game was played out in midfield, but an error from the base of a scrum saw loose ball pounced on by the opposition scrum half Rumsey to scamper over the line midway out on the left with the resultant Orris conversion giving the visitors a 12-13 advantage. With the home side struggling to put some continuity into their game as they looked for a winning score, a penalty conceded in midfield gave the reliable boot of Orris the opportunity to extend their lead and take the win 12-16.

In summary, despite the disruption to the side Maidstone can look at this match very much as a missed opportunity, notwithstanding the disallowed try, penalties in key areas cost them points and they demonstrated a lack of composure at times when they could have closed out scoring chances.