



## Match Report



London Division 1 (South)

Maidstone FC 41 v Chiswick RFC 21

Played at The Mote, Saturday 12th September, 2015



Maidstone played Chiswick, their first home opponents in London 1 South, last season in the regional final of the Intermediate Cup and so had a good idea of the game plan that would be served up against them. And they were not disappointed. With pick and drive the starting point for Chiswick's attacks, the Maidstone eight knew they were in for a testing afternoon. It augurs well for this season that they all rose to the challenge and came out on top.

The much changed back line could also have been a source of concern: while first names may not yet be rolling freely off the tongue, it's clear an understanding is building. Moves are beginning to show the required penetration, amply demonstrated last year, and a six-try haul is, by no means, a shabby return for an afternoon's work. But here is plenty more to come from this unit, once the bedding in process is completed.

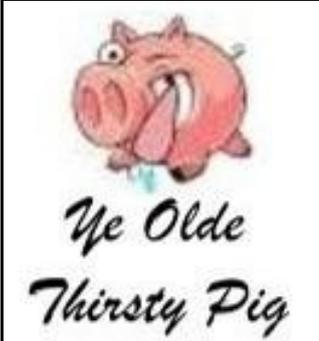
The first win of the season, by 41 points to 21, gave Maidstone, a bonus-point victory that rubbed a few more rough edges off this season's squad and set it up for greater challenges to come.

The early exchanges were all played in mid-field. But it was Maidstone that started the score board moving, after five minutes, when after a penalty awarded on the half way line, followed by a line out in the visitor's 22, saw Pankhurst get the touch-down following a catch and drive .

Chiswick's reply was quick in coming. A kicking exchange saw Maidstone drop the ball in their own 22 and an adjudged off side saw allowed Chiswick fly half, Hill, the opportunity to reduce the deficit to two points.

Maidstone had to wait to the 20 minute mark to increase their lead. And like the proverbial London buses, two tries came in quick succession. The first followed a





One name that guarantees excellence.



break out from their own 22 down into the opposition 22, and when it looked like the Chiswick defence had snubbed the threat, a pass inside by winger, Waring, released Webb to score by the touchline.

The second came from the restart, when Maidstone regained the ball and a precise cross kick by fly half,

Millar, picked out winger, Waring, who chose to move inside and on meeting defensive traffic gave an 'over-the-shoulder' pass for full back, Beech, for another score. Millar found his range with this one to extend the lead to 17-3.

With Chiswick reverting to their forwards to restore some control, they reduced the deficit just past the half-hour, with left-wing, Dimitriadis getting the touch down following a good run by centre, Sutherland. But with the half reaching its conclusion, a fourth, bonus-point try was posted for Maidstone with Waring completing the move, this time, near the touchline. Millar found his range with this one and stretched Maidstone's lead to 24-8.

Chiswick were not yet done. A quick tap penalty in the Maidstone 22 was held but with a further defensive infringement conceded, an easy penalty saw Chiswick reduce the deficit to 24-11 just before the break.



With a number of positives emerging from the first half, it was clear that the messages from the coaching team at half time chose to address some of the weaknesses. As a consequence, the second half started with more energy, highlighted by some great tackling by Joel Byford.



But it was a yellow card for Chiswick second row, Cody-Owen, for dropping the Maidstone jumper in the line out, followed by an injury to prop, Shattock, forcing him to leave the field that gave Maidstone the licence to dominate play. A catch and drive from the Chiswick 22 almost reached the line but one more

play saw skipper, Williams, taking the final pass to crash over by the posts, making the conversion by Millar a formality.

This should have provided Maidstone the platform to completely dominate the game. But dogged resistance by Chiswick and some crunching gears within the Maidstone attack allowed the visitors to post the next score as centre, Godfrey, completed a period of pressure on the Maidstone line to reduce the deficit to 31-16.

With Chiswick believing a revival was on the cards and Maidstone conceding some



of their early zip, an interception-try by centre, Webb, and the conversion by Millar, quickly scotched these thoughts. But with Byford replaced by Doughty, the scrum came under increasing pressure and with two yellow cards conceded by Maidstone in a long, defensive play, Chiswick posted a third try, by Number 8, Daroch, off the back of a five metre scrum.



With a clear head and a rugby brain needed, up stepped man-of-the-match, fly half, Millar, to firstly drop a goal from the ten metre line and then kick long for territory to keep the play in the Chiswick half, to see out the long period of added time.

In summary, a good start to the Maidstone campaign. There will be tougher challenges but there is, clearly, much more to come from this unit. Familiarity from game time will generate more cohesion but the solidity of the front five looks like a solid platform on which to build the future.

**Maidstone:** Williams, Pankhurst, Byford, Ellis, Knight, Johnson, O'Connell, Cowan, Eastwood, Millar, Webb, Skelton, Waring, Beech. **Replacements:** Doughty, Corbyn, Pitkin (all used)

