



## Match Report



London Division 1 (South)

Sutton & Epsom 31 - Maidstone 17

Played at Sutton & Epsom, Saturday 26 September, 2015



The structure and outcome of this game reflected that played out last week at Sidcup, with the result a similar, 31-17, loss to Sutton & Epsom. A convincing first 60 minutes, with the Maidstone three-quarters looking sharper and more constructive than their hosts, followed by a final quarter where a number of misjudgements allowed Sutton to run away with the game, followed last week's pattern.

In addition, the home No 8, Whitaker, ran in three second half tries. But this time it was not fitness or skill that was at fault: the loss was ultimately down to basic mistakes by Maidstone that gave good field position to the hosts allowing them full advantage.

With Luke Debnam and James Corbyn on the treatment couch after last week's encounter, Steve Doughty stepped into the front row and Lewis Stimpson into the openside flanker spot, while new recruit, Ben Massey, joined the second row. The backs were unchanged except for the centres who swapped positions to play to their strengths.

With Paul Hodgson, the former England and London Irish scrum half, turning out for the hosts, Maidstone needed no telling that the accumulated experience in the opposition, from playing in London 1 for the last few seasons, would put them in a strong position from the off. It was



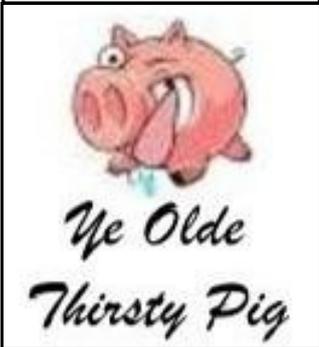
also clear from the high tempo start generated by Sutton that they intended to take advantage of this knowledge but once Maidstone had weathered the opening storm, keeping their line intact with some fine defensive work, the visitors



G CHARLTON & SONS  
RUMWOOD GREEN FARM

TRUST  
**FIRMIN**  
TO DELIVER

**topnotch**  
health club



JAGUAR  
LAND-ROVER  
GUY SALMON

One name that guarantees excellence.

SINCE 1898  
**SHEPHERD  
NEAME**  
MASTER BREWERS

**SIBLEY  
PARES**  
CHARTERED SURVEYORS

**SHARPAK**  
AYLESHAM

**FGBarnesGroup**  
Delivering excellence since 1899

**MidKent College**

**SAMURAI**  
SPORTSWEAR

**VIVID ASSOCIATES**



got themselves back into the game.

Indeed, as last week, Maidstone were first on the scoreboard, this time with thirty minutes on the clock. Craig Webb was on the end of a pass from fly half Millar, following a quick tap free kick by Morosan. This score was the culmination

of a spell of pressure by the visitors, which built good field position and stretched the Sutton defence. With Millar slotting the conversion, Maidstone looked to be taking their lead into half time.

But following a poor restart and a series of penalties in their own 22, culminating in a Millar kick being charged down, Sutton levelled the scores with the last play of the half. Having failed to score following a five-metre scrum and then failing to score out wide, the referee called the play back for a further Maidstone infringement and this time a quick tap to hooker, Bennett, saw him go over half way out. With Hurley making the conversion, the teams went into half time deservedly level.



The inclusion of Ben Massey in the second row was clearly having a positive impact on the Maidstone line out but in the scrum, the combined eight was coming under increasing pressure from Sutton. The replacement of loose head prop, Doughty, by Fitzpatrick after half an hour for a knock on the head probably compounded this issue.



Maidstone started the second half with greater intensity and after only four minutes scored their second try. This time it was Ben Williams that got the touch down after a line out on the Sutton 22. When a drive to the right had been held, Morosan switched the play back left to find space for a Williams run to the line, giving Millar an easy conversion.

It was at this point, just after ten minutes, that the cracks in the Maidstone scrum began to be exploited by the home eight. Firstly, a scrum was lost against the head and this was followed, almost immediately, by a second Sutton scrum, which, with a timely wheel, allowed the No 8, the first



of his hat-trick of tries.

With Matt Iles coming on for his first outing of the season to replace Stimpson and slotting into the No 8 berth, there was immediate improvement in the scrum and this allowed Maidstone the space to structure a new platform to get back into the game.



The end of the third quarter saw the visitors regain the lead after Millar calmly converted a penalty awarded for off side in the Sutton 22. But this was the high water mark for Maidstone's reply as errors of judgement crept into their play which allowed Sutton to take advantage. With two further tries by their No 8 and one by winger Hurley, with two of the three converted by Hurley, saw the last quarter going entirely to the home side. Maidstone were, once again, left to lick their wounds.

The frustrating thing for Maidstone was that Sutton were not a better side. Their three quarter line showed little penetration all afternoon: it was their scrum that ultimately won the battle of the tight with a number of Maidstone feeds being lost. But ultimately, it was the three mistakes by Maidstone in the last quarter that allowed Sutton the field position to drive home their scrum advantage.

There are lessons to learn!

### **Maidstone**

Williams; Pankhurst; Doughty; Knight; Massey; Johnson; Stimpson; Cowan; Morosan; Millar; Waring; Webb; Skelton; Eastwood; Beech

**Replacements:** Fitzgerald; Iles; Ring

