



Match Report

London Division 2 (South East)

Warlingham RFC 11 v Maidstone FC 46



Played at Warlingham, Saturday 14th September, 2013

Brachers

law



After two seasons in London 3 (SE), Maidstone started their league campaign away from home against a burly side, who were proven performers at this level and who had beaten Maidstone soundly and by some margin the last time they met in this league. As such, this was an eagerly anticipated fixture that would show if Maidstone had what it takes to perform at this level again....



The answer was an emphatic, YES, and although their performance was by no means perfect, they showed real touches of class in a game where they were fitter, sharper and more precise than the opposition in weather conditions that tested their skill set to the full.

Warlingham had the lion's share of possession in the early encounters but Maidstone soaked up the pressure well with their well-organised and solid defence. Starved of possession to mount

any real attacks, Maidstone made good use of their first opportunity after 5 minutes, when the ball was turned over and kicked through by fly-half Van de Westerlo. Good work at the breakdown and a patient build up resulted in skipper, Williams using his strength to dive over and secure Maidstone's first try. Van De Westerlow converted to give a 7 point lead.



From the re-start, Warlingham kicked long and a penalty for not releasing was converted to bring Warlingham back into the game. The same offence was then awarded in Maidstone's favour, soon after and Van De Westerlo added the 3 points to give a 7 point margin once again.

After a short passage of see-sawing play, where Maidstone began to continually ask questions of the Warlingham defence, the forwards began to exert their dominance in attack, with Williams setting the ball up in midfield, to suck in the Warlingham defence. The ensuing quick ball from the base allowed centre, Mark Dorman the space out wide to outstrip the defence to score. Van De Westerlo having nearly used his allotted time for the conversion and under extreme pressure from the approaching Warlingham players, then coolly struck the ball from wide-out to hit the cross-bar and bounce



over to add the extras and give Maidstone a 3-17 lead after the first quarter.

Kicking deep once again from the re-start allowed Warlingham to gain territory and a period of re-cycled possession culminated in a penalty being awarded for off-side. The penalty was successful kicked to reduce the score-line to 6-17.





Despite the weather conditions, the handling at times by Maidstone was sublime, with the forward and backs combining well to make in-roads into the Warlingham defence. Adopting a direct, off-loading game, powerful running allowed, second row, Evans to burst through the Warlingham defence to score on the 25 minute mark. With the successful conversion by Van De Westerlo, the lead was increased to 6-24 and with Maidstone in full control.

However, this lead was short-lived as Warlingham, once again went deep from the re-start, resulting in Maidstone having to clear their lines. This allowed the Warlingham forwards to set up a catch and drive from the line-out, resulting in an unconverted try - the only time that the Maidstone forwards were really tested in the tight. With the drizzle increasing in intensity and Maidstone starting to look threatening every time they got the ball, a number of unforced errors, meant there were no further scores in the half, which finished on 11-24.

The effect of the rain made conditions difficult and both sides committed a series of 'knock-ons' in the early part of the second half. However, it was Warlingham, who settled best and for a good deal of the 3rd quarter, Warlingham pinned Maidstone back in their 22. Despite this, Maidstone were highly effective in repelling any attacks and gradually began to re-gain territory by moving the ball quickly. With a clear ascendancy in the scrum by Maidstone, the pressure was beginning to tell up-front for Warlingham and Maidstone were awarded a penalty, for a scrum offence, which was successfully kicked by Van De Westerlo to make it 11-27.

With Maidstone now looking to pull away against a Warlingham side that was beginning to tire, a well-read interception by Van De Westerlo from half-way out resulted in a sprint to the line and although the covering Warlingham defence managed to tackle Van De Westerlo, his momentum took him over to score and provide Maidstone with their 4th try for the bonus point and to stretch the lead to 11-32.



The next try came from a quick tap penalty taken by the ever-aware, scrum-half, Hogben, which released winger Iles, who still with much to do, outflanked the defence to score to the right of the posts. Van De Westerlo, added the 2 points. The last try came following a period of relentless pressure, when Evans powered over from 5m to claim his second try.

Maidstone are at home next week against local rivals Medway in what promises to be another stern test.

Maidstone

Ben Williams; Sam Bailey; Olly Smith; Alex Sterzu; Lee Evans; Josh Pankhurst; Paul Hyland; Jack Davidson; Adrian Hogben; Caleb Van De Westerlo; Willie Brown; Mark Dorman; Lucian Morosan; Matt Iles; Josh Jensen.

Replacements (All used): Danny Baker; Nick Bunyan; Jason Smith

