



Match Report



London Division 2 (South East)

O Colfeians RFC 13 v Maidstone FC 72

Played at Horn Park, Saturday 28th September, 2013

Brachers

law



After last week's disappointing outcome, this 72-13 dismantling of Old Colfeians restored pride and confidence within the team and their travelling supporters. Horn Park has been a barren hunting ground for Maidstone for many years, so to win by such a margin, against recently relegated Colfes, came as a surprise. But this was a deserved victory that will send shockwaves through the league, as well as restoring momentum to Maidstone's season.



With Lee Evans side-lined with an ankle injury, James Iles stepped up from the Mustangs for his first start of the season, partnering Ben Brill in the second row, with Alex Sturzu on the bench. Caleb Van de Westerlo returned after missing last week's game with a back injury, Willie Brown moved over to inside centre and Matt Iles returned to his favoured No. 8 position. An interesting



selection, after a number of outstanding games for the Mustangs, was Brad Ford. An outside half with a big boot, he started on the bench and in a 25 minute cameo, when the game was effectively won, showed some neat touches to his game and a level of confidence, which promises well for the future.

The early exchanges saw Colfes spend the first few minutes in Maidstone's half but as the visitors got their game together and started to use their forwards to establish field position, it became clear that Maidstone's possession game plan would be hard to stop. An early penalty after a scrum saw Caleb Van de Westerlo get the scoreboard rolling and, almost directly from the re-start, a slack pass by Colfes was intercepted by right wing, Steve McNamara, on his own 22, and he outspurred the cover to score in the corner.

Just past ten minutes, another Maidstone try emerged after some impressive build up play, this time Willie Brown was on the end of the move as the Colfes defence was eventually overwhelmed. Van de Westerlo added the conversion to post a 15 point margin, which was extended to twenty points on the quarter hour. This time a clean break by Dorman, in the centre, was rounded off by Jensen, coming into the line, to touch down in the corner.



Colfes managed to reduce the deficit with a penalty after a Maidstone player came in to the side of a ruck, but the game was being played almost predominantly in the Colfes half, their brief forays forward coming from long kicks from the boot of fly half, Gallagher, which Maidstone's defence dealt with effectively, throughout.



Maidstone's bonus point for their fourth try of the afternoon came on twenty five minutes. This time it was skipper Ben Williams that completed the action but it was the relentless build up by the whole side that delivered the opportunity that allowed him to touch down behind the posts. Two more tries by Williams, on 35 and 42 minutes, allowed him a quick fire hat trick before the break and with Van de Westerlo converting two of them, Maidstone moved into a 39-3 lead.

A last minute Colfes penalty reduced the arrears to 39-6 on the stroke of half time, but the damage had been done and the only question for the second half was the margin of victory. With Maidstone's scrum dominant, seemingly pushing the Colfes eight off the ball at will, and their line-out secure, the platform for a relentless running game by the whole side was built on a solid platform up front.

As is often the case after such a dominant first half, the second began with Maidstone making some sloppy mistakes. In addition, Colfes pride had been hurt and they resumed with a plan to reduce Maidstone's effectiveness and this they did for the first ten minutes. But once the visitors' running game was re-established, the tries began to flow once more.

A decisive break by Matt Iles, from the base of the scrum, fed Mark Dorman to complete the move from the Colfes 22, to get Maidstone's score moving again just past the ten minute mark and this was consolidated by a solo effort by the same player from the restart, running from his own 22 to touch down under the posts once more to extend the lead to 53-6.

Colfes gained some consolation from a try of their own, at the end of the quarter, when Gallagher caught a knocked on Maidstone pass to score under the posts, reducing the deficit to 53-13. But the die was now cast and, with Nick Bunyan, on for Jack Davidson, showing his full repertoire of running and passing in the loose, further scores were inevitable.



And so it proved, with Sam Bailey getting his first of the afternoon on 20 minutes, following some good approach work by Jensen, added to by McNamara for his second and rounded off by Jensen with an impressive solo effort on 35 minutes. Ford posted the conversion on the last, for his first points for the team, but his sweetly timed pass for the McNamara try had the purists salivating.

When Maidstone are allowed to play in this way, they appear unstoppable, as indeed they were for much of this game. But tougher challenges lie ahead, especially if the opposition deny them the ball for long periods, which Colfes were unable to achieve. But the demonstration of the depth of the Maidstone squad was the unspoken gain of the afternoon, with the second and back rows looking particularly secure with James Iles and Nick Bunyan demonstrating the depth of talent available.

Maidstone

Ben Williams; Sam Bailey; Ollie Smith: Ben Brill; James Iles: Jack Davidson (Nick Bunyan 50 mins); Josh Pankhurst; Matt Iles: Adrian Hogben; Caleb Van de Westerlo (Alex Sturzu 65 mins): Lucien Morosan; Willie Brown; Mark Dorman (Brad Ford 55 mins); Steve McNamara: Josh Jensen

Replacements: Nick Bunyan; Alex Sturzu; Brad Ford

