16 November 2019

Maidstone Vets 26 - 5 Crawley 3/Vets

Match report ( by Matt Ellesmere)

“Apart from two or three of you [you can judge for yourselves who they might be by looking at the team sheet below] you are all pretty sh1t so make sure you work hard and don’t rely on the galácticos.'' Or words to that effect. So spoke our captain (or should it now formally be manager?) in what turned out to be his final sentence before he was invited to “shut the feck up”.

You might argue it worked given that we won but just imagine what we could have done? Incidentally at the same time, according to a reliable source - well, ok - the ref, the opposition’s team talk was all about wreaking vengeance from the previous week. So that worked then (unless they were specifically targeting Chris Hogg’s shin bone or helping scrum half Gary Whitehead achieve his aim of being marched back the full length of a rugby pitch over the course of one season by Simon Wright).

Anyway, unlike last week there was no delay in us getting off the proverbial bus. Attacking the slope on the first team pitch the ball was rarely seen in our half during the first period with our backs and forwards working in harmony leaving the on-lookers purring with satisfaction (if the club president and former Vets’ skipper does purring?).

Winger Paul Hodges (of whom a younger self may have had a first half hat-trick) opened the scoring. This came from a strong run from flanker Nick East and a clever switch from attacking the open side to the blind side with good hands from the fly-half [me] and centre Eugene Moore. This was swiftly followed by another well worked try involving No 8 Ben Court, the half backs and full back Adrian Clark allowing Moore to touch down in the corner.

The actual rugby was then interrupted by a bit of MMA. You might not be surprised to hear that this involved Nick East ( 3 times) and Gary Whitehead ( only 1 time but by far the better combination of punches). Unfortunately no one told prop Chris Hogg about his starring role.

Back to the rugby. The third try was a result of Ben Court combining well with Nick East and centre Richard Cutbill to crash over. This was soon followed by a solo effort from Court, marking his return to the Vets following first team duty, breaking away from the base of scrum and exploiting space in the Crawley defence. The first half tries were supplemented by three successful conversions.

Safe to say the second half wasn’t as smooth (unlike the port kindly supplied by Crawley at half time). The word attritional comes to mind. It certainly wasn’t helped by the injury to Chris Hogg in the latter stages of the first half which meant us now having two stand in props. Take a bow however Stuart Ellesmere and Tom Clarke for taking one for the team (in fact Stuart ended up taking two fractured ribs for the team. Is there no end to the injury crisis in the front row facing the club presently?).

The visitors did succeed in breaching our defence once in the second half but by and large we held out pretty well and arguably, despite a retreating scrum by this stage, finished the stronger.

MotM: Many contenders. Colin Frost having a great game on the flank, Mark Ingram playing with a smile (albeit still trying to pass one handed), Adrian - a man for all positions and Ben showing why he's so coveted by the first team. Winner: the human dynamo that is Nick East with a literal appetite for the battle (any battle).

TotM: With many a punch up comes many contenders. However, this week is the same as last week, the pint dodging Tom Clarke, who once again had someone step in for him. This is his award until he drinks the drink and walks the walk.

Further shout outs to Simon Wright for refereeing and to Mick Walker, Chris May and Mike Gillies for stepping up to help the Mustangs put in a creditable performance at Whitstable. And get better soon Chris Hogg & Stuart Ellesmere.

Scorers

Tries: Hodges, Moore, Cutbill, Court. Cons: Ellesmere M (3).

Ref: Simon Wright

ME.

Squad:

1. Christopher Hogg injured 1st half replaced by Tom Clarke;

2. Mark Ingram;

3. Stuart Ellesmere;

4. Tom Clarke, replaced in 1st half by Mick Duggan;

5. Nigel Maddaford 1st half, Gary Griffiths 2nd half;

6. Colin Frost;

7. Nick East;

8. Ben Court;

9. Gary Whitehead (Captain);

10. Matthew Ellesmere;

11. Dan Wiles 1st half; Damien McArdle 2nd half;

12. Eugene Moore 1st half;  Simon Seal 2nd half;

13. Richard Cutbill, replaced in 2nd half by Eugene Moore;

14. Paul Hodges;

15. Adrian Clark;

16. Karim Neseyif (Waterboy, Captain, Manager & unused sub).

