



# Match Report



## London & SE Division 2 (South East)

Maidstone FC 25 v Heathfield & Waldron RFC 27

Played at The Mote, Saturday 12th January 2019



With the visitors from Sussex lying at the foot of the table, this was a “must-win” match for them if they are to have any hope of escaping relegation and they duly did what was required of them to take 5 points from the game. Whether it will have proved to have been a “must-win” match for Maidstone will be revealed in the coming weeks as a run of winnable matches unfolds, but to have lost the first and probably the most winnable of these, is not a good omen. As a consolation though, how crucial might prove to be the 2 bonus points achieved in defeat, which was the least that Maidstone deserved from the day.

With several changes to the side that came quite close to upsetting high-flying Charlton Park last week, the scrum and line-out functioned well all day, with the considerable presence of veteran prop Martin Maytum enabling Maidstone to get a shove on at will and Tom Varker consistently hitting his jumpers, Charlie Williams, Jamie Marzetti and Tom Chandler, but there was not a great deal of penetration from the forwards in open play and the three-quarters never looked like being able to cut through their opposition, despite the strong running of George Perry in particular, who had another good game and the undoubted pace of Scott De Zoeten on one wing and Ollie Jenkins on the other.

It was 22 minutes before the opening score, a penalty to Heathfield for diving over in a ruck. This was swiftly followed by a George Perry penalty to even the scores at 3-3. From the re-start, Maidstone gained good field position and a line-out 7 or 8 metres out from the Heathfield try-line.

Jamie Marzetti caught cleanly and on landing, found a gap in the Heathfield line to power over for an unconverted try to make the score 8-3, but the optimism quickly faded when Heathfield managed a forward’s rumble to score an unconverted try of their own to level the scores.





At this point, Sam Weston took a heavy knock whilst making good ground in the Heathfield 22, to be replaced by Sean Farmer, making his 1<sup>st</sup> Team debut. George Perry was unlucky to see the ball cross the dead-ball line before he could ground it, after scything through the Heathfield defence and chipping ahead. De Zoeten then seemed to be in for a try on the oppo-

site wing but was tackled before grounding and the ball was held up. However, from the resultant 5 metre scrum, Sean Farmer picked up and scored to give Perry his easiest conversion kick of the afternoon and a Maidstone half-time lead of 15-8, albeit a lead gained whilst playing down the slope of the pitch.

Five minutes into the 2<sup>nd</sup> half and Maidstone were defending the North West corner and had comfortably secured possession but an attempted box-kick from skipper Lucian Morosan was charged down and the Heathfield flanker was able to gather and score near the touch-line, the failed conversion leaving Maidstone a fragile 2 point advantage.



Maidstone were then able to stretch their lead back to 7 points with what was probably their best passage of play. Full back Alex Clark, who took the MotM award for his reliable tackling and good work in attack, found a gap to make 25 metres before offloading to Mikey Grice who appeared to have scored but was adjudged held up. From the resultant 5 metre scrum, Dan Fisher moved the ball quickly to George Perry who offloaded neatly to Scott De Zoeten to score in the corner.

Once again, the home-side's euphoria was short-lived as almost immediately, a Heathfield run into the North-West corner, although snuffed out by another good Alex Clark tackle, was quickly spun right where the defence was outpaced on the outside for a canter under the posts and an easy conversion for a 20-20 tied score.

The next score was also to be Heathfield's as Maidstone were penalised on the Heathfield 22 for diving-over and the relieving penalty kick to touch gave Heathfield a platform from which to run through the defence for their 5<sup>th</sup> try of the afternoon and a 27-20 lead.



Maidstone were not yet beaten and with 12 minutes to play, a penalty right under the Heathfield posts looked like a certain 3 points and plenty of time

left to go in search of a winning try. But instead, the home team elected to go for a scrum, which appeared successful at first as Marzetti broke with the ball and reached the line before recycling to Sean Farmer who grounded on the line under the posts to triumphant cheers from the Maidstone players, only to be denied for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time in the match owing to the referee being unsighted. He of course could not give what he did not see.



Maidstone maintained the pressure but precious time passed before De-Zoeten, who did well to hold off his tackler and stay inside the touch-line, dived over in the corner for 5 points that would prove to be Maidstone's final score of the day, as Heathfield ran down the clock from the restart without much difficulty.

Despite the sterling efforts of the players on the pitch, especially recognizing the contribution from Veterans Martin Maytum and former First Team captain Dave Charlton, this was a day when the parts of the machine didn't quite synchronise and the team never got into top-gear. Heathfield to their credit, defended as though their survival depended on it and showed considerable skill in making the most of the chances that came their way.

**Maidstone:** Martin Maytum, Tom Varker, Will Fox, Charlie Williams, Tom Chandler, Jamie Marzetti, Dan Fisher, Sam Weston, Mike Grice, Lucian Morosan, Ollie Jenkins, Dave Charlton, George Perry, Scott De Zoeten, Alex Clark

**Replacements:** Will Lane, Sean Farmer, Jack Bramwell.(All used)

