



Match Report



London & SE Division 2 (South East)

Maidstone FC 15 v Dover RFC 8

Played at The Mote, Saturday 27th October 2018



After the disappointment of having victory snatched away with the last kick of the game last week, this was just the 'shot in the arm' that Maidstone needed against an unbeaten Dover side, sitting 2nd in the Table. This was a victory built on an outstanding defensive display with the freedom, confidence and intent to move the ball wide whenever the opportunity presented itself, which caused some real problems for the Dover defence.

Indeed, Maidstone started the game spritely and had it not been for some handling errors in the first 10 minutes, Maidstone may well have had 2 early scores. However after a number of exchanges by both sides and Dover's tactic of running the ball on every occasion, it took 20 minutes before a penalty was awarded to Maidstone that fortuitously went over via a deflection off the posts. Much of the rugby that followed contained errors from both sides in attack with knock-ons a plenty. The resultant scrums were on the whole solid from a Maidstone perspective, which provided the base required to launch their attacking game.

The Dover back-line and supporting forwards continually tried to find in-roads into the Maidstone defence, which was resolute throughout, particularly out-wide and it took a quick tap penalty and some slick handling for Dover 10 to score in the left hand corner for an unconverted try and get their first points on the board. Dover then squandered an opportunity later in the half as the try line beckoned and the half ended at 3-5, with the game finely balanced.



The second half saw the ball being moved by both sets of backs, linking well with





their respective forwards and with only 5 minutes gone a penalty kick for off-side at the ruck extended the Dover score to 3-8. However, Maidstone responded well and started to apply pressure on Dover through some strong runs in the 10/12 channel and on the flanks, resulting in an increased penalty

count. This allowed Maidstone good field position to mount a catch and drive from the lineout, which led to a forwards try by Fisher, which was duly converted from out-wide.

With the successful conversion, Maidstone now had their noses in front by a 2 point margin. Dover continually ran at the Maidstone defence trying to find ways through but Maidstone kept knocking them down or forcing errors a result of the tackle and pressed defence.

In attack, Maidstone's ball-carrying and phase play were used to good effect and in the last 20 minutes they consistently went beyond the gain line, patiently working their way into the Dover 22 through good ball retention and re-cycling. Dover were equal to the defensive task until a powerful line break by



Marzetti was followed up by the ever-present Amos to bull-doze over into the corner to score in the dying minutes of the game, making the final score 15-8.

What was impressive about this performance was that it was real team effort from all involved, built on a strong display up-front, particularly at the breakdown and the set piece despite the pack having to be re-jigged, supported by a back-line that had a real cutting edge and unlike last week, Maidstone were savvy in closing out the game by keeping possession and staying composed.

As always, there is still much to work on, not least the need to be more clinical when try scoring opportunities present themselves but it is clear that this squad



are improving each week and starting to play an effective and enjoyable brand of rugby. With more players now available and coming back from injury and the squad starting to gel, Maidstone now have a real platform to move forward with optimism. Next week

Maidstone are away to Haywards Heath, who are 5th in the league table.

Maidstone: Jack Bramwell; Tom Varker; Ashley Gilligan; Charlie Williams; Ben Massey ©; Dan Fisher; Jordan Amos, Jamie Marzetti; Mikey Grice; Jack Leach; George Perry; Ollie Newton; Vaki Antoniou; Scott de Zoetten; Alex Clark.

Replacements: Ryan Murphy; Dane Smith; Will Lane (all used).

