



Match Report



London & SE Division 2 (South East)

Maidstone FC 0 v Beckenham RFC 59

Played at The Mote, Saturday 30th March 2019



In the reverse fixture at the end of last year the county town side shipped 50 points to the then league leaders; four months on and little had changed as Beckenham, requiring just a point to secure the league title did what they needed to do, to deservedly take the champions accolades.

That is not to say that Maidstone didn't play their part in a match where the real difference between the two sides wasn't an array of star players, but an opposition that was an organised well drilled collective that defended well and when they forced the error or turned the ball over, had the composure to know what they were going to do with possession.

On a bright spring afternoon with little breeze Maidstone fielded a side with few changes from the narrow loss at Gravesend, Will fox returned to the front row whilst Ben Massey started in the second row as Charlie Williams moved to the flank in the absence of Will Lane. The changes in the back line were in the back three and saw Ollie Jenkins on the wing for the injured Jason Smith and James Douglas in the full-back position.

Maidstone's troubles started in the fifth minute when they lost their own midfield lineout and a quick break down the fifteen meter channel saw the ball shipped left for a try in the corner. With a second try coming on the fifteen minute mark, again in the left corner as Beckenham ran the ball back when Maidstone failed to find touch with a penalty, the conversion then took the score out to 0-12.



Having struggled to get out of their own half for much of the opening quarter Maidstone did finally started to put some phases of play together which resulted in some





real pressure on the Beckenham line under their own posts. Whilst the attack was eventually rebuffed as Maidstone were penalised, it had resulted in Beckenham's fly-half Richards being yellow carded for a cynical infringement.

With a man advantage one might have expected Maidstone to have capitalised

but just past the half-hour a lineout from a midfield penalty saw Beckenham carry the ball up the centre channel of the pitch before scrum half Thomson was able to scamper past some poor defending to dot down under the posts, with the kick a formality the score stretched out to 0-19.

Restored to full complement Beckenham secured the bonus point in the 10 minutes of stoppage time when despite the home sides tackling, some good offloading in the Maidstone 22m created the extra man for the try wide on the left, a good conversion took the score at the interval to 0-26.

Maidstone showed some solid defence in the opening minutes of the second half but against a solid Beckenham defence struggled to make inroads into opposition territory. Towards the end of the third quarter Beckenham extended their lead as the home side trying to force the play spilt the ball in midfield, quick as a flash Beckenham transitioned from defence into attack to break away with Thomson on hand for the final pass to score wide on the right. This was quickly followed by another as a midfield scrum against the head saw a break up the middle before the ball was moved to again cross in the right corner.



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Going into the last 10 minutes Beckenham were on the scoreboard again as a break in midfield saw the scrum half complete his hat-trick. Two further scores in closing stanza stretched the score to 59 points with Maidstone's only real opportunity coming as De Zouten was tackled into touch as he touched down in the right corner.



In summary, Maidstone will probably look at this match as following the trend of the earlier encounter where too many of their own errors gifted opportunities to the opposition who had the ability to take chances when they presented themselves with some clinical finishing. Maidstone bring

down the curtain on this season as they travel to face Horsham next week in an encounter that is critical to their hosts promotion aspirations.

Maidstone: Fox; Varker; Gilligan; Massey; Chandler; Williams, Fisher; Weston; Morosan; Clark; Antoniou; Smith; De Zouten; Jenkins; Douglas

Replacements (All used): Lee; Murphy;

