( Slightly delayed match report 4 of 4)

Match Report 16/02/2019

Maidstone Vets v Dover II

(Mustangs league game)

HT  14 - 12

FT   31-  17

Tries

Dover try – 0-5

Dover try (con) – 0-12

Martin Maytum try (con.M Walker) 07-12

Martin Maytum try (con.M Walker) 14-12

HT 14 -12

Dover try 14-17

Matt Cooper try 19-17

Pete Gray try 24-17

Andrew Bell try (con Lewis Fagg) 31-17

FT 31 -17

Squad

01 Matt Cooper replaced with 5 to go by Neil Cole

02 Mark Ingram replaced in 2nd half by Pete Gray

03 Martin Maytum replaced in 2nd half by Jason Hudson

04 Nigel Maddaford 1st half / Tom Clarke 2nd half

05 Mick Duggan ankle injury 1st half replaced by Chris May

06 Ian Lee

07 Colin Frost replaced in 2nd half by Peter Bulford

08 Ben Court

09 Gary Whitehead injured replaced in 2nd half by Ben Tugwell

10 Mick Walker

11 Marco Trismegisto Bauchiero 1st half / Danny McLeish 2nd half

12 Lewis Fagg (Captain)

13 Ben Tugwell replaced by Matthew Ellesmere in 2nd half.

14 Anthony Round ankle injury 1st half replaced by Ryan Harrison

15 Andrew Bell

00 Neil Cole (Manager)

50 JJ Hudson – Waterboy

99 Ollie Court – Waterboy

Match Report by Matt Ellesmere

As the news broke Friday evening at the Flowerpot about Anchorians bombing the scheduled fixture and the Vets effectively taking over the Mustangs' fixture v Dover IIs (you can always rely on the Flowerpot for breaking news about all things Maidstone rugby related, even if its not always true) it was fair to say not many of those gathered were particularly enamoured by the prospect.

Not that this bothered the head Waterboy who after muttering something along the lines of "that's gonna hurt" promptly went off on a 9 hour sojourn to the French Alps (fortunately he left his eldest son behind).

For the rest of us there was of course only one solution and that was to have another pint (or 3).

The good news in terms of the actual game was that we had a large number of 'finishers' on the bench. We also had the wise pre-match words of Mick Walker and Gary Whitehead, one of whom made the valid point that even if the opposition youth had pace they weren't going to match the bulk of a typical Vets' team. Meaning that we should have the better of them when running at them and tackling them.

There was never a more accurate match forecast. The phrase 'men against boys' comes to mind.

While we made some very early incursions into their half, it was Dover who scored first……… And second. Using the pace that was predicted (and despite the first up tackling of fullback Andy Bell). After that however (apart from right at the beginning of the second half) it was a different story.

The pre-match brief was to put them under pressure when we were defending, run hard and straight when attacking, punch holes, support each other in contact and then...and only then spread the ball when the space appeared. It is fair to say that to a man that plan was executed.

In the first half the man perhaps making the biggest holes (particularly at scrum time) was Mayhem (Martin Maytum) who drove over twice for two converted tries.

14-12 up at half time. Of the Flowerpot regulars who'd have thought it?

As alluded to earlier Dover scored first in the second half, without us even touching the ball after kick off, using that thing called pace again.

They were obviously buoyed by the fact they had managed to pull the wool over the referee's eyes somewhat by convincing him that the scrum had to go uncontested.

Little did they realise that this only gave our forwards more energy to punch even more holes in their defence. You would have also been forgiven to think that the opposition's youth may have meant greater energy levels in the last quarter but this did not materialise either (ok - it may also have had something to do with the fact we had 8 or so on the bench).

In fact it was the last third of the game that we really came into our own. Firstly a try from Matt Cooper after a strong drive from the forwards and then from a perfectly executed rolling maul from a line-out with front rower Peter Grey (returning early from surgery) applying the coup de grace.

The final try came from Andy Bell showing great perseverance in contorting his body over the line to dot down for a converted try in front of the sticks. Soon after the young Dover team had clearly had enough; it was they who kicked the ball dead after the referee had signalled the last play.

As El Capitano has pointed out elsewhere on these pages and in the post match speech no player was selected as Man of the match such was the all round performance of everyone who took the field.

Some further honourable mentions however for full back Andy Bell, centre Lewis Fagg whose strong ball carrying never gave the Dover backline any rest, similarly the ball carrying exploits of forwards Horse (Ian Lee), Chris May and Mick Duggan with Ben Court showing off his silky footballing skills at every available opportunity; Colin Frost and Peter Bulford in the lineout; half backs Gary Whitehead and Mick Walker in running the game plan effortlessly; the 'finishers' for seamlessly slotting in when required; and finally Neil Cole and Karim Neseyif selflessly managing from the side lines.

Likewise there was no TotM either though this didn't stop nominations for Jim Walker (crying off Saturday morning with gout) and Mayhem (jug avoidance: coming off after scoring two tries - the fact that he did buy a jug would have meant this would not have stood up in a court of law -  not that a court of law has anything to do with clubhouse justice).

PS: NB - Saturday's performance and result should not automatically mean that the Vets should regularly step up to fill the Mustangs' fixtures. Thought I should just mention that. Who knows - we may have had another round in the 'Pot on Friday and not saved ourselves for Saturday!

ME.