

TWRUFC v AYLESFORD BULLS RFC



OFFICIAL MATCH DAY PROGRAMME



Thanet RUFC
Wanderers



SAT 9 NOV 2024 | KO 14:00

MINIMUM DONATION £3

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Good News !

Congratulations to the men's 1st team on their unbeaten run so far this season. Teams entertained us two weekends ago with the 2nd team winning their home game against Tunbridge Wells with the last kick of the match, courtesy of Callum Duffey with a penalty kick just inside the opposition's half and the 1st team scored in the 74th minute to win 25-24 to come from 17-24 behind against Old Alleynians 2nd XV . The third team also delighted in a win 56 -12 against Canterbury. The Vets game against Canterbury was cancelled as Canterbury withdrew!

Today we welcome Aylesford Bulls, who are 5th in the League with 22 points, Thanet are positioned 2nd with 30 points.

Aylesford's average score for an away game is 25 points and 37 for a home game so they look like a team that likes to run the ball wide and we must endeavour to counter this .

We welcome Lee Walker who is the man in charge today. We look forward to a good, flowing, injury free game this afternoon, a game that reflects the competitive nature of the sport and upholds the true values of the game.

Both ends of the spectrum! I watched our Walking Rugby session the other evening which was well attended with players of all ages (predominately over 55), ability and sex. There is a regular turnout of 16-20 players. On Sunday morning we have our Rugby Rats, which is aimed at toddlers and that has reported attendance of 16 children. I understand it's a bit like herding cats, but who cares as long as they are out in the fresh air chasing a rugby ball around, the same for the Rugby Rats.

On the 23rd of this month we shall be having a Presidents Lunch, which also coincides with my 60th birthday so please come along if you can make it. At £ 20 a head for a 3 course lunch its fantastic value and of course there is the social that goes with it. The lunch is before the home game against Folkestone so please contact Kelly (07368 969558) if you want to book. At a recent Committee meeting I was shocked to learn that the Kent Referees Society charge for a referee. This is not the shocking news, but Thanet District Council charge a pitch fee every time we have a home game, the combined value of these cost is £170 .

That's £ 170 even before we've kicked off !!!!! So please support your Club by attending the above event.

It has been proposed that we kick off the December away game on the 7th of December against Old Elthamians by hiring a coach for supporters. This should be an excellent away day with a bit of a theme so please let me or Kelly know if want to book your seat.

And finally, Friday the 29th of November sees "Le Crunch" between St Lawrence College and Chatham House under Floodlights at the Club. It's a great night with some really hard fought rugby and the players raise their game for a large crowd.

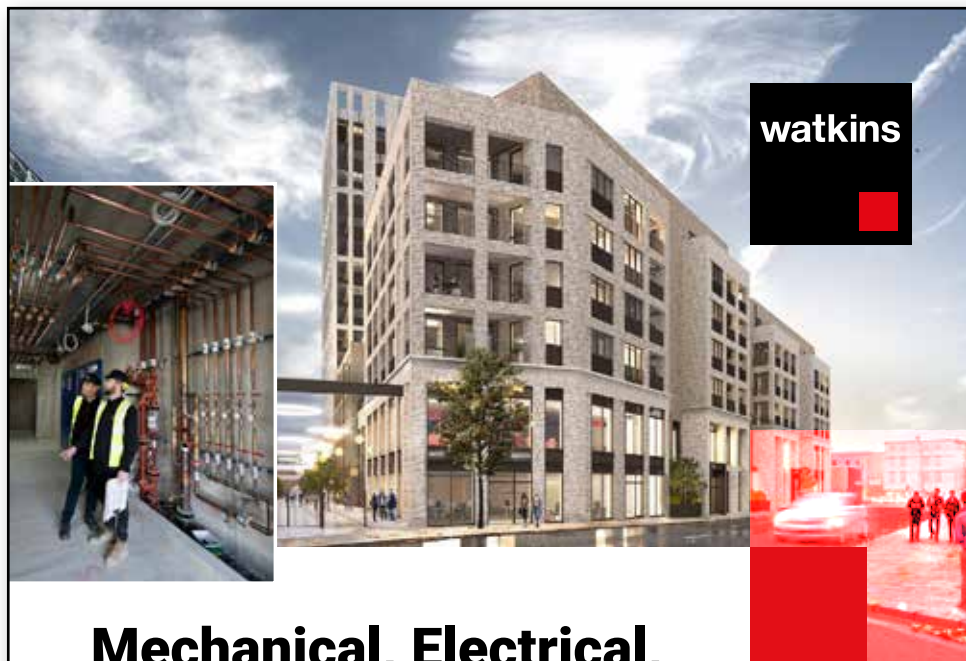
November!, what's not to like, there's plenty of rugby, food and drink to be found at St Peter.

CLIVE LEWIS
Club President



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FROM THE HEAD COACH

Welcome back to The Rec Aylesford Bulls. The last time we crossed swords was on the 4th March 2023. The result that day was 22-6 to us and I remember it well as it was a close game. Aylesford Bulls currently sit a healthy fifth in the league and come off the back of good results against Maidstone and Vigo.

The last week off in early October didn't treat us well. After the break we played against Dartford and were rusty. Not this week though, the boys have worked hard at training and attendance has been good. Our last game against Old Alleynians 2nds was a close match, but ended with a very good result for us. Some great running rugby and good team cohesion led to a great team performance.

As always we want to thank you all for your support, our 16th "Man on the Balcony". Having you cheer us on means so much to the players.

Ultimately, we play to win, but we also play to enjoy the game. The boys have been enjoying their rugby and this has been reflected in our results. They play hard and work hard and we are all proud of them.

Let's celebrate every thing that happens today, regardless of the result.

"Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts".

ELLIOT BLACKMORE
Head Coach



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FIRST XV. COUNTIES 2 KENT LEAGUE FIXTURES FOR THE 2024 -25

2024

September

7	GILLINGHAM ANCHORIANS	HOME
14	VIGO	AWAY
21	MAIDSTONE	HOME
28	SIDCUP 2NDS	HOME

October

12	DARTFORD VALLEY	AWAY
19	MEDWAY 2NDS	HOME
26	OLD ALLEYNIAANS 2NDS	AWAY

November

9	AYLESFORD BULLS	HOME
16	WESTCOMBE PARK 2NDS	AWAY
23	FOLKESTONE	HOME

December

7	OLD ELTHAMIANS	AWAY
14	VIGO	HOME
21	MAIDSTONE	AWAY

2025

January

4	SIDCUP 2NDS	AWAY
11	DARTFORD VALLEY	HOME
18	MEDWAY 2NDS	AWAY

February

1	OLD ALLEYNIAANS	HOME
15	AYLESFORD BULLS	AWAY

March

1	WESTCOMBE PARK 2NDS	HOME
8	FOLKESTONE	AWAY
22	OLD ELTHAMIANS	HOME

April

5	GILLINGHAM ANCHORIANS	AWAY
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Fixtures in BLOCK TYPE are COUNTIES 2 KENT LEAGUE matches

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Company owner and founder Chris Wilson says "AvMan sponsors Thanet Wanderers again this year not to gain any commercial advantage but simply to help a great club that puts so much into the local community. "This is why we don't use our company logo on the team shirts but instead present the squadron logo of 29 Squadron RAF, where I served as a mechanic on Lightning aircraft which gave me so much and I wanted to give some recognition back"

AvMan is always looking to employ local people to be trained as engineers so if this might suit you or anybody you know please contact us at 01843 824640 to join another happy and worthwhile team.

We all wish Thanet Wanderers a great season and look forwards to a long and successful future.

MATCH REPORT

OLD ALLEYNANS 24 THANET WANDERERS 25

This was a hard fought game with neither side able to sustain a period of consistent possession throughout. The home side were quick to start with an early try. Thanet responded from the restart and were soon deep in the opposition's 22 and driving towards the line when they were awarded a penalty try as Alleynians were deemed to have pulled the maul down. Alleynians were also reduced to 14 men as they received a yellow card for the infringement which took Thanet into the lead after 6 minutes. 5-7. Although unable to capitalise on the extra man for the 10 minutes, Thanet did make a couple of breaks for the line and were also held up once. As Thanet continued to apply pressure. a charge down in the nineteenth minute saw Thanet extend the lead with their second try of the game from Dennis Davies.

Alleynians then enjoyed a period of possession but were unable to make this count with the visitors staying solid in defence and at one point returning down the path to again be held up across the line. Just before the half time whistle, Alleynians made a quick break up the field and, with good handling, scored a converted try, to even the scores at 12 all.

The hosts started the second half quickly and drove Thanet off the ball to score a try within 2 minutes of the restart and lead 17-12 as it was not converted. Thanet then maintained some possession and completed a move up the pitch to score another try by Finley Hickmott and draw level again at 17-17. The last half hour of the match was set up to be a tight contest with both teams striving for the win and a possible bonus point.

Alleynians were the first to break the deadlock with a try under the posts that was easily converted after 55 minutes 24-17. There was then a period of a midfield battle with Wanderers trying to keep possession and the home team determined to maintain the lead. On 66 minutes a penalty from Lewis Downer made it 24-20 but it took until the 74th minute for them to break the line again as Downer grounded the ball for the bonus point try. Although Alleynians pushed hard in the last minutes of the game they were unable to pierce Wanderers' defence. Thanet took 5 league points from a hard fought game with both sides contributing to a well played match.

Wanderers Coaches' choice as their man of the match was Finley Hickmott who has broken into the first XV this season and continued his excellent start with a try and another good all round performance in the back row. There is no match or the first XV this coming Saturday; they will return to league action with a home fixture against Aylesford Bulls on the 9th of November when the kick off time will be at the new time of 2PM.

Team: Michael Whitehead, Warren Riddell-Broomfield (Capt.), Dominic Springer, Lenny Brown, Dennis Davies, Finley Hickmott, Brett Scott, Ben Cannon, Callum Doody, Adam Harrison, Leon Doody, Lewis Downer, Louis Marshall, Andrew Dolan, Harrison Quittenden, Kurt Pearson, Chris Gregory, James Crompton.

Tries: Dennis Davies, Lewis Downer, Finley Hickmott, Penalty Try.

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KENT COUNTIES LEAGUE 2 2024-25

TEAM	P	W	D	L	P/F	P/A	P/D	T/B	L/B	PTS	ADJ
OLD ELTHAMIANS	7	6	0	1	236	96	140	6	1	31	
THANET WANDERERS	7	6	1	0	166	108	58	4	0	30	
GILLINGHAM ANCHORIANS	7	6	0	1	191	95	96	3	1	28	
SIDCUP 2ND XV	7	5	0	2	215	112	103	3	0	23	
AYLESFORD BULLS	7	4	0	3	212	161	51	5	1	22	
OLD ALLEYNANS 2ND XV	7	3	0	4	212	209	3	6	2	20	
MEDWAY 2ND XV	7	4	0	3	157	149	8	3	0	19	
FOLKESTONE	7	2	0	5	189	207	-18	3	2	13	
WESTCOMBE PARK 2ND XV	7	2	0	5	136	277	-141	3	0	11	
MAIDSTONE	7	2	0	5	110	277	-167	2	0	10	
DARTFORD VALLEY	7	1	1	5	125	173	-48	3	1	10	
VIGO	2	0	0	7	134	219	-85	2	3	5	

KENT COUNTIES LEAGUE 2 FIXTURES

Saturday 9th November 2024	Medway 2nd XV v Sidcup 2nd XV
Dartford Valley v Old Alleynians 2nd XV	THANET WANDERERS v Aylesford Bulls
Gillingham Anchorians v Old Elthamians	Vigo v Folkestone
Maidstone v Westcombe Park 2nd XV	

MATCH REPORT

THANET WANDERERS RUFC 30 – 20 MEDWAY RFC 2S

Wanderers retain second place in the league after a hard-earned, bonus point, victory.

There were first starts for Dominick Springer at tight head prop and Finley Hickmott at six. Ben Cannon started at number 8 and Dennis Davies was back in the second row. Henry Mirams returned to play in the centre with Callum Doody filling the fullback spot. Wanderers started the match in second place in Kent 2 with Medway in fifth place.

The morning's rain had gone leaving a pleasant afternoon and a good playing surface as Wanderers kicked off up the slope. Left wing, Harrison Quittenden used his exceptional speed to chase and then leap above the visitors' defence to secure possession and set Wanderers on the front foot. The pressure was maintained, Thanet's pack was unstoppable and Mike Whitehead claimed the touchdown within a couple of minutes. Back surged Medway and on five minutes, despite a superb tackle from Doody, their forwards were celebrating a converted try and a 7-5 lead. Cannon was clearly enjoying his No 8 role and on nine minutes there was no stopping him as he sped over after some quality handling in the build-up.. The 10-7 lead was short-lived as three minutes later Medway's kicker slotted a penalty from near the home ten-metre line. Wanderers were showing great enterprise in attack but over ambition saw opportunities missed. Medway went ahead with a straightforward penalty after 27 minutes. With around five minutes of the half remaining, a quality build-up from Thanet followed by a lovely combination between Lewis Downer and Ben Cannon ended with the number 8 weaving through for his second try. There was no conversion but the Wanderers led 15-13 at the break.

Wanderers again made a fast start to a half when Cannon picked up near the line and tacked his way across the field before touching

down near the posts for a try to complete a brilliant hat-trick. Downer's conversion made it 22-13. Andrew Dolan had joined from the bench at halftime but soon returned there for ten minutes, following a yellow card. Downer now converted a penalty to stretch the home advantage to 25-13. Louis Marshall was on the wing today and spotted a gap before dodging and speeding his way to the line for a fine individual try to give Thanet a 30-13 lead with half an hour remaining. The visitors reduced the margin by seven points with 15 minutes remaining to raise their hopes of bonus points. Thanet's defence stayed strong and Adam Harrison's long clearances were of great value. Downer took a knock and was replaced by Charlie Panteli, home from Uni for the weekend. A very kickable penalty opportunity was not taken in favour of a set move but there was no further score and Wanderers took the win 30-20.

Lots of quality performances throughout a side who were stingy in defence and lively in attack today; so there were many candidates for Thanet coaches to choose as their man of the match. It was a joint award to outside centre, Henry Mirams and his wing partner, Louis Marshall who combined so well in attack and defence. Wanderers remain unbeaten in second place having won five and drawn one of their six games.

SQUAD; Mike Whitehead, Warren Riddell-Bloomfield, (C) Dominick Springer, Andy Letts, Dennis Davies, Finley Hickmott, Brett Scott, Ben Cannon, Tom O'Callaghan, Adam Harrison (JVC), Harrison Quittenden, Lewis Downer, Henry Mirams (JVC), Louis Marshall, Callum Doody,

SUBS Lenny Brown, Andrew Dolan, Charlie Panteli.

COLIN WHITELEY



WOMEN'S NC2 SOUTH EAST (EAST) LEAGUE 2024-25

TEAM	P	W	D	L	P/F	P/A	P/D	T/B	L/B	PTS	ADJ
THANET WANDERERS WOMEN	4	4	0	0	181	17	164	0	0	19	
AYLESFORD BULLS LADIES	3	3	0	0	173	0	173	0	0	15	
ASHFORD LADIES	4	2	0	2	71	125	-54	0	0	14	
LORDSWOOD VALKYRIES LADIES	3	1	0	2	40	119	-79	0	0	9	
GRAVESEND LADIES	2	1	0	1	59	88	-29	0	0	7	
BECCEHAMIAN LADIES	3	0	0	3	5	118	-113	0	0	6	
BECKENHAM LADIES 2ND XV	3	0	0	3	47	109	-62	0	0	5	

WOMEN'S NC2 SOUTH EAST (EAST) LEAGUE RESULTS

Sunday 20th October 2024

Ashford Ladies 15-5 Beccehamian Ladies

Beckenham Ladies 2nd XV 5-36 THANET

WANDERERS Women

Lordswood Valkyries Ladies 0-53 Aylesford

Bulls Ladies

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1 MICHAEL WHITEHEAD

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2 WARREN RIDDELL-BROOMFIELD (C)

Postition sponsored by: Mike Beaumont

3 DOM SPRINGER

Postition sponsored by: Ernie Blakemore

4 ANDREW LETTS

Postition sponsored by: Mark O' Riordan

5 DENNIS DAVIES

Postition sponsored by: Dave Brown

6 FINLAY HICKMOTT)

Postition sponsored by: Michelle McClean

7 BRETT SCOTT

Postition sponsored by: Chris Marson

8 BEN CANNON

Postition sponsored by: Terry Tutte

Head Coach

ELLIOT BLACKMORE

Postition sponsored by: Colin Whiteley

Assistant Coach

KIERAN HOPPER

Postition sponsored by:

Team Manager

MICHELLE MCLEAN

Postition sponsored by: Carmen Glover

9 TOM O' CALLAGHAN

Postition sponsored by: Jeremy Ward

10 CHARLIE PANTELI

Postition sponsored by: Ray Roby/Peter Tierney

11 CALLUM DOODY

Postition sponsored by: Pegasus Storage Solutions

12 LEWIS DOWNER

Postition sponsored by: Bill Hurley

13 LOUIS MARSHALL

Postition sponsored by: Andy Bull

14 ANDREW DOLAN

Postition sponsored by: Paul Glover

15 HARRISON QUITTENDEN

Postition sponsored by: Geoff Redmond

Replacements:

16 LENNY BROWN

17 JAMES CROMPTON

18 LEON DOODY

Referee

LEE WALKER

Touch Judge

TBC

AYLESFORD BULLS RFC

AWAY TEAM COLOURS:

1 DARREN JALINK

2 BEN PASS

3 LEE GILCHRIST

4 CAMERON PARKER

5 GEORGE HEPPER

6 TRAVIS COETZER

7 TOM BURNETT

8 CHARLIE PULLEN

9 LUKE CURTIS

10 GEORGE AYES

11 BARNEY BROWN

12 BRAYDEN SMITH

13 ED MEAD

14 TOM HUGHES

15 FIN AD

Replacements:

16 JORDAN O' LEARY

17 LIAM TYLER

18 CHRISTIAN DOLLEY

Coach

DAVID TENTERS

Coach

JONATHAN ALDERTON

Team Manager

BILLY CORBETT

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Thursday night the call went out
'The Captains short' became the shout
The phones were ringing with the captains plea
The last one left, dear god was me.

My body does not bely my age
I played before, 'Crouch Bind Engage'
My playing days I thought were done
Just one more game, it will be fun

Said no one at all, not never, no
I cannot bend and run too slow
I used to be a crafty 10
But never play that way again

Saturday came as did the worry
A dodgy stomach from last night's curry
The borrowed shorts that did not fit
Should I take that pre game shit

The whistle blew, the ball flew high
All eyes were trained into the sky
'Yours' was the call as I looked up high
My nipper went I cannot lie

It took an age to get to me
My arms outstretched, 'catch it' the plea
The crowd it held its breath as one
The ball it fell and spun and spun

It dipped to the left, then to the right
I knew I should have had that shite
I caught the ball and called the mark,
A deathly hush around the park

For as the ball was taken cleanly
Something happened quite unseemly
The game itself was now disrupted
As that curry now erupted

The rugby shorts were white no more
As sludge dripped down onto the floor
The mark was called and also made
A different game must now be played

The tap was taken and off I dashed
The nasty mess the players splashed
No tackle made, left well alone
I fell into the scoring zone

The game was won, I was the hero
A point to us, the oppo zero
A tunnel formed I took the lead
They ushered me through at record speed

So, if you play that comeback game
In the hope of lasting fame
My sound advice and consider it
Always take that pregame shit.

Anon



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Left to Right: Flynn & Greg Shingles, Oskar & Bill Wallace, Stuart Plumridge & Ellis Rees-Plumridge, Tom & Ed Harvey

MATCH REPORT

SATURDAY 26-10-2024

At St Peters on Saturday, Wanderers 2 and 3s played league rivals Tunbridge Wells and Canterbury and both won to make it a full hand of wins for the Wanderers during the afternoon.

On the main pitch, the 2s had much the best of the first half against their west Kent rivals. However, most of the second period belonged to the visitors and they led narrowly going into the final minutes. A spirited attack from Wanderers was halted illegally leaving young Fly Half, Callum Duffy, a kick from just inside the opposition half to win the match. He hit it firm and true for the three points that gave Thanet a 20-18 victory.

Meanwhile, a threes side that contained four sets of Dads and their sons played in the same side that took on Canterbury. It was the first time that the Plumridges, Stuart and Ellis, had donned Wanderers jerseys together, but the Harveys, Shingles and Wallaces are experienced pairings. Congratulations to them all for playing their parts in a convincing win by 56 points to 12 against old rivals Canterbury. Father Matt Jury and son Josh were appearing for Wanderers 2s at the same time and moves are afoot to field a Wanderers side containing just Dads and their sons.



KENT RURAL A LEAGUE 2024-25

TEAM	P	W	D	L	P/F	P/A	P/D	T/B	L/B	PTS	ADJ
EDENBRIDGE 1ST XV	7	5	0	2	187	94	93	0	1	23	
TUNBRIDGE WELLS 3RD XV	6	5	0	1	170	81	89	0	1	22	
SNOWDOWN CW	6	5	0	1	209	97	112	0	0	21	
DOVER 2ND XV	6	4	0	2	207	91	116	0	0	18	
THANET WANDERERS 2ND XV	5	4	0	1	125	91	34	0	0	17	
AYLESFORD BULLS 2ND XV	6	3	0	3	123	189	-66	0	0	14	
ASH	7	2	0	5	142	159	-17	0	1	14	
CRANBROOK 2ND XV	6	2	0	4	76	151	-75	0	1	12	
WEAVING WARRIORS	6	2	0	4	145	181	-36	0	0	10	
MEDWAY 4TH XV	6	1	0	5	127	192	-65	0	0	9	
FOLKESTONE 2ND XV	7	1	0	6	70	255	-185	0	0	7	
FOLKESTONE 2ND XV	1	0	0	1	0	40	-40	0	0	0	

KENT COUNTIES LEAGUE 2 FIXTURES

Saturday 19th October 2024

Ash 10-14 Snowdown CW

Aylesford Bulls 2nd XV 7-24 Cranbrook 2nd XV

Dover 2nd XV HWO Weaving Warriors

Folkestone 2nd XV 6-24 Edenbridge

Medway 4th XV 21-34 THANET WANDERERS 2nd XV

Saturday 26th October 2024

Cranbrook 2nd XV 24-14 Ash

Edenbridge 40-6 Dover 2nd XV

Snowdown CW 43-3 Folkestone 2nd XV

THANET WANDERERS 2nd XV 20-18 Tunbridge Wells 3rd XV

Weaving Warriors 57-17 Medway 4th XV

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KENT RURAL B LEAGUE 2024-25

TEAM	P	W	D	L	P/F	P/A	P/D	T/B	L/B	PTS	ADJ
ASHFORD BARBARIANS	7	6	0	1	209	70	139	0	0	25	
DEAL & BETTESHANGER 2ND XV	6	5	0	1	227	93	134	0	0	21	
GRAVESEND 3RD XV	6	4	0	2	165	108	57	0	0	18	
MAIDSTONE MUSTANGS 2ND XV	6	3	0	3	142	156	-14	0	0	15	
THANET WANDERERS 3RD XV	5	3	0	2	154	100	54	0	0	14	
SITTINGBOURNE 2ND XV	6	2	0	4	131	173	-42	0	0	12	
LEIGH (KENT)	6	2	0	4	152	171	-19	0	0	11	
SHEPPEY 2ND XV	5	2	0	3	85	147	-62	0	0	10	
CANTERBURY 4TH XV DEACONS	6	2	0	4	118	242	-124	0	0	10	
VIGO 2ND XV	6	1	0	5	124	195	-71	0	1	9	
DOVER 3RD XV	5	2	0	3	78	130	-52	0	0	8	

RESULTS FROM KENT RURAL B LEAGUE

Saturday 19th October 2024

Ashford Barbarians HWO Vigo 2nd XV

Canterbury 4th XV Deacons AWO

Maidstone Mustangs 2nd XV

Deal & Betteshanger 2nd XV 38-17

Gravesend 3rd XV

Dover 3rd XV 38-10 Sittingbourne 2nd XV

Sheppey 2nd XV 40-22 Leigh (Kent)

Saturday 26th October 2024

Gravesend 3rd XV 45-5 Sheppey 2nd XV

Leigh (Kent) HWO Dover 3rd XV

Maidstone Mustangs 2nd XV 12-21 Ashford Barbarians

THANET WANDERERS 3rd XV 52-12 Canterbury 4th XV Deacons

Vigo 2nd XV 20-41 Deal & Betteshanger 2nd XV

Saturday 2nd November 2024

Canterbury 4th XV Deacons v Sheppey 2nd XV

Dover 3rd XV v THANET WANDERERS 3rd XV

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RESULTS GRID COUNTIES 2 KENT LEAGUE

AWAY TEAM ▶	AYLESFORD BULLS	DARTFORD VALLEY	FOLKESTONE	GILLINGHAM ANCHORS	MAIDSTONE	MEDWAY 2s	OLD ALLEYNANS 2s	OLD ELTHAMIAN	SIDCUP 2s	TWRUFC	VIGO	WESTCOMBE PARK 2s
HOME TEAM ▼												
AYLESFORD BULLS			43-28	15-25	53-6							
DARTFORD VALLEY								31-50	7-12	12-12	31-7	
FOLKESTONE				15-22				38-31				61-26
GILLINGHAM ANCHORS		25-5						48-33				38-5
MAIDSTONE		34-24						14-44	10-72		30-25	
MEDWAY 2s		33-15	26-19	10-27	22-5							
OLD ALLEYNANS 2s								0-35		24-25	34-18	46-31
OLD ELTHAMIAN	31-12		34-14			43-14						
SIDCUP 2s	28-24		25-14					7-31				63-6
TWRUFC				12-6	37-12	30-20			21-8			
VIGO	27-29					10-32				26-29		
WESTCOMBE PARK 2s	17-36							18-12			34-21	

RESULTS FROM KENT COUNTIES LEAGUE 2

Saturday 19th October 2024

Dartford Valley 7-12 Sidcup 2nd XV

Gillingham Anchorians 38-5 Westcombe Park 2nd XV

Maidstone 14-44 Old Alleynians 2nd XV

Old Elthamians 34-14 Folkestone

THANET WANDERERS 30-20 Medway 2nd XV

Vigo 27-29 Aylesford Bulls

Saturday 26th October 2024

Aylesford Bulls 53-6 Maidstone

Folkestone 15-22 Gillingham Anchorians

Medway 2nd XV 33-15 Dartford Valley

Old Alleynians 2nd XV 24-25 THANET WANDERERS

Sidcup 2nd XV 7-31 Old Elthamians

Westcombe Park 2nd XV 34-21 Vigo



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MATCH REPORT

THANET WANDERERS U15S VS ASHFORD U15S

3rd November at Ashford Rugby Club. Sunday the 3rd brought perfect conditions for Thanet U15s visit to Ashford to play the second of their league matches of the season. Thanet's first match saw them win at home to Dover and so they stood as the league leaders going into this match.

The games between these two teams are always close and another tough battle was expected. Thanet won the toss and kicked off and the first 10 minutes of the match were a tough forward battle with good rucking and counter rucking by both sides. Most of the play was held in the Ashford half as much of the first half action continued to be. The work the forwards had been doing during their Wednesday training sessions was really paying off and a series of very strong runs, particularly by the Thanet back row of Patrick Gartrell, George Saunders and Nye Potter, was causing Ashford to dig deep defensively.

After 18 minutes the pressure became too much when from an Ashford put in the ball squirted out and was picked up by Nye Potter who charged through to the 10-metre line. Ashford regained possession but the clearance kick was charged down by Marshall Hughes and a good bounce found the ball bouncing into the hands of Dexter Sproates who ran in for Thanet's first try of the game.

The conversion attempt from the side line was narrowly missed and after another 15 minutes of hard forward exchanges the half time whistle went with Thanet leading a close match 5-0.

Changes were made in the back line with Jack Sperryn coming on in the centre for Andrew Bull, but the pack continued as per its starting line up hoping to maintain their slight dominance at the breakdown.

The second half was underway and Finlay Smith continued his kicking masterclass by continually turning the Ashford defence, making sure the game was being played in their half. The huge defensive effort that Ashford had put in to keep Thanet at bay in the first half seemed to be taking its toll as the fitness levels of the Thanet team started to show. Repeated pick and goes from the Thanet forwards made ground. Dexter Sproat made another breakaway towards the Ashford 22 passing to Noah Manga who was held up over the line. From the resultant scrum the Ashford fly half kicked from

behind his line which was collected by Dexter who then released Tim Wehrly. The ball was secured at the breakdown and Harrison Tickle, the Thanet 9, quickly fed Finlay Smith, who having spotted the space out wide, moved the ball through the centres to James Kebbell who unselfishly put in the Thanet 15, Jamie Barbara who had intelligently joined the attacking line looping in behind his winger. The angle again was a little too much for the conversion attempt and Thanet were now 10-0 up.

The Thanet forwards were now in the ascendance with the Ashford pack starting to tire. An Ashford scrum on their 22 saw good line speed from the Thanet backs shutting down the Ashford centres and from the resultant break down, Nye Potter, who had an immense game at the breakdown, regained possession, Harrison Tickle fed to Finlay Smith who then saw the opening and ran through from 10 metres out to touch down under the posts. This time the conversion was successful, and Thanet now stretched out the lead to 17-0.

The game was now being played almost exclusively in the Ashford 22 and from a Thanet scrum inside their 22, George Saunders picked up from the base of the scrum and broke through two tackles and scored under the posts. Finlay Smith completed his 2nd conversion of the day, and the score now stood at 24-0.

The game was not over however as Ashford fought their way into the Thanet 22 and some very strong forward play by Ashford was beaten off by some determined defence by the Thanet team. The last 5 minutes of the match saw Ashford camped on the Thanet line but a knock on saw Thanet win back possession and the final whistle went with a 24-0 win to Thanet.

As always, the matches played between these two teams are very competitive but always played in a very good spirit. The after-match analysis had this as probably the best all around squad performance that the boys have had to date with those coming off the bench having a real positive effect on the game. Thanet now have 2 friendly games against Bromley and Tonbridge Juddians before their next league match against Gillingham Anchorians on December 15th.

ANDY BULL

Fundraising Quiz

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