

Hertfordshire v Kent Girls U18s

Venue: Cheshunt RFC, Herts

15th January 2023 KO: 2:30pm

A GAME OF THREE HALVES??!!

After the postponement, of the county's 2nd fixture just prior to Christmas owing to the weather, the U18s girls' second match was again away to Hertfordshire. The entire available squad of 32 girls made the journey with the view to everyone getting game time in a match split into three periods of 30 minutes.

1st Period: 10-10

The first period saw a dominant Herts pack impose themselves on the game allowing them to score 2 tries in the first ten minutes giving them a strong 10-0 lead. However, slowly Kent brought themselves back into the game with a try in the corner from Beckenham winger Funto Akarakiri after 20 minutes and a subsequent individual try from the fleet of foot Iona Woodhouse from Tunbridge Wells brought the scores level at the end of the period.

2nd Period: 12-0 Herts

The second period saw Kent very much on the back foot for much of the period which saw Herts run in 2 tries with one conversion. However, despite a lot of pressure, the Kent girls defended well to keep the score to just two tries despite intense pressure.

3rd Period: 5-12 Kent

The final third started in a similar fashion to the second with Herts getting an early try. However, Kent rallied after this and were camped in the Herts half for the vast majority of the game. This pressure led to outside centre, Aylesford's Lucy Evans spotting a gap from 5 metres and pushing through to place the ball down for a try. However, in a vain attempt to stop her from scoring, a Herts girl pulled on Lucy's ponytail, leaving the referee with no choice but to show a red card to the Herts player and award a penalty try, guaranteeing Kent the extra 2 points. Continued intense forward pressure from Kent led to Gabrielle Otubela of Old Alleynians playing prop in this period driving her way through the Herts defence for a further try. Kent kept pushing for a further try to bring the cumulative score to parity but Herts stoically held out and were relieved to kick the ball out on time to allow the referee to bring the game to an end. Kent simply ran out of time.

This meant that the cumulative score was **27-22** or a draw across three distinct games. Whatever the view, it gave the entire squad a chance to represent their county after the frustration of the cancelled training and fixture.