

Kent U18s 64 – 19 Eastern Counties

Kent U18s produced a dominant all-round performance to ease past a high-quality Eastern Counties XV. The resolute defence shown in the previous fixture was again in evidence, matched by real energy with ball in hand — whether through lightning ruck speed or electric pace out wide. Eastern Counties enjoyed extended spells of pressure, but Kent simply refused to crack.

It was sharp, clean recycling inside the EC 22 that delivered Kent's opening score, Brandon Nathan finishing clinically. He would prove to be a constant thorn in Eastern Counties' side throughout the afternoon. **7–0**

Moments later, Callum Chandler stole a lineout before Nathan again burst through the defensive line — not for the last time — and with more rapid ball at the breakdown, Matt Bailey powered over from close range. **14–0**

Eastern Counties then laid siege to the Kent line, but outstanding defence forced a loose kick that fell kindly for Kent's rapid back three. A series of scything counter-attacks took Kent deep into EC territory, and with forwards and backs working seamlessly together, the ball found its way to the corner where Ethan Rose finished emphatically. **19–0**

A superb carving run from the EC fly-half ended with a dropped pass just short of the line — a let-off for Kent that proved short-lived as Eastern Counties stole a scrum and crossed for a well-deserved first try. **19–7**

From the restart, Kent dominated the aerial contest and worked just enough space on the wing for Oscar Sands to unleash his pace and score his first of the afternoon. **26–7**

A long spell of fast, fluid attacking rugby followed, fiercely contested by both sides. Strong defence and a slippery ball repeatedly denied clean finishes, until a sharp line from the EC centre found a half-gap and delivered their second try. **26–14**

One of Kent's standout attributes is their ability to turn defence into attack in an instant. An EC knock-on near Kent's 22 was scooped up, several players combined — including a deft kick from Jake Ward — and just 25 seconds later Josh Hacker crossed the line. **33–14**

Half-time arrived with floodlights on and the wind changing direction. While Kent had hoped for the breeze at their backs, the shift encouraged them to carry more ball — a decision that paid handsome dividends.

Kent's forwards continued their relentless go-forward, with Ethan Rose and Brandon Nathan again to the fore. Nathan was only half-tackled and not held, allowing him to spring up and race 70 metres, with Hayden Pender in perfect support to finish under the posts. **40–14**

The introduction of the Kent "finishers" brought no relief for Eastern Counties. Freshly on, George Souter combined superbly with fellow centre Arthur Wood — two passes, big metres, and Souter was over. **47–14**

Eastern Counties again piled on the pressure, but Kent held firm and exited in true Barbarians style, running from deep and covering 80 metres. Tatenda Majachani made two tackles and a

crucial jackal in quick succession to hand Kent excellent field position. From there, another half-gap was all Oscar Sands needed; with Jared Van Zijl in support, the pair beat the scramble defence and Sands claimed his second. **54–14**

From the restart, Thanyani Nematswerani burst 40 metres before a Kent infringement allowed EC to kick deep into the 22. A failed lineout fell kindly for an EC prop, who ran in almost unopposed for their third try. **54–19**

Kent responded immediately. A long EC clearance failed to find touch, and Jake Ward linked with Ethan Thomas and George Souter, who tore through for a blistering 75-metre run, held up just short. A few crisp phases later, Callum Chandler crossed for another reward for the tireless second-row partnership. **59–19**

Late on, the Eastern Counties defence finally began to fracture. Kent's centres again exploited an uneven kick chase, this time with Souter providing the final pass for Arthur Wood to score a richly deserved try. **64–19**

Eastern Counties continued to throw everything at Kent until the final whistle, but fittingly, it was Kent's high-energy defence that closed the game out — just as it had begun.

Full time: Kent U18s 64 – 19 Eastern Counties