

Westcliff 5 Wimbledon 24

Westcliff's fine unbeaten start to the season finally came to an end at The Gables on Saturday in this top of table clash, as a Wimbledon outfit who are by some way the stand-out side in the division proved superior on the day, despite coming under plenty of pressure from the hosts. It seems difficult to imagine that they will be thwarted in their quest to return to Level Four immediately. Having by their own admission been guilty of complacency in their unexpected reverse against CS Stags the previous week, it was very clear that Wimbledon were not going to make the same mistake again. In particularly unpleasant playing conditions which made handling something of a lottery, Westcliff held their own for the first twenty minutes, before suffering a massive blow when pivotal prop Ewan Binneman was taken off with a broken arm, which is likely to side-line him for the foreseeable future. The enormous Wimbledon pack capitalised on Westcliff's discomfort and bulldozed over for two tries and a penalty try as the Westcliff scrum, try as they might, was unable to match the visitors physically. In addition, the watertight Wimbledon defence frustrated several enterprising Westcliff attacks. Every single Westcliff player gave one hundred per cent, and deservedly denied Wimbledon the try bonus point, also being rewarded late on with a fine try from Charlie Brown after a forward surge. With other results going their way, Westcliff remain second in the table and have a much-needed week off to recover from the effects of a very bruising encounter. Off the pitch, a highly successful lunch in aid of the Lady McAdden Breast Cancer Charity led to a bumper crowd of attendees raising over £1,650 for this good cause.

It was of course a disappointment to lose and whilst it's fair to say a few things didn't go our way I think we would acknowledge that Wimbledon deserved to win and showed why they are most people's favourites for promotion. Big powerful and experienced with quality in all areas they will take some stopping nevertheless were it not for the early disruption of the inevitably long-term injury to Tight Head prop Binneman and a few costly errors things might have been different. We will take positives from the game and look forward to our next game away at Guildford in a fortnight. The rest week between then and now will be a very welcome opportunity to rest and recover after a gruelling opening 6 weeks of the season. Having licked our wounds, we will come out fighting again looking to maintain and improve upon our excellent start to the season.

Bannister, Brown S, Stol, R Smith, Merrick, Ansell, Spivey, C Brown, B Marrant, Binneman, Dartnell, Edwards, Vandermolen, Hatton, J Smith REP Weston, Marsh, H Marrant