

Westcliff 38 Tring 11

A week off to rest and recover wasn't quite enough to allow Rob Smith and Josh Stol to return to the squad while the mid-term injuries for Binneman and Brown continued to keep them out. Still side-lined by longer term injuries were Webster, Macintyre Jobling and the malingering Hopkins. Back into the squad from the defeat at Sutton came Edwards, Vandermolen, Marsh and the evergreen Mckeith. Seventeen of the eighteen-man match day squad had progressed to adult rugby through the club's youth section.

Although primarily dry, conditions were soft underfoot after mid-week rain and it was decidedly cooler than of late. Westcliff started the game with a modest breeze at their back but a bright sun in their eyes. Tring started well enough but within 10 minutes found themselves 10-0 down as Westcliff punished spilt midfield ball and executed an effective driving maul to score tries through Jones and Billy Marrant. Jones struck the upright with the attempt to convert his own try and was also unsuccessful with his next effort.

The next 20 minutes were fought intently with neither side troubling the scoreboard despite robust and occasionally fractious competition at the breakdown, as it would continue to be throughout. Just after the half hour mark Tring forced and converted a penalty reducing the arrears to 10-3 but Westcliff were quick to respond when an audacious cross field kick from Mckeith found Sam Brown on the full and he outstripped the defence to race home. Jones added the extras and the hosts led 17-3. As the half drew to a close Tring added another penalty but in the final play Westcliff punished them further when a kick in behind from Spivey was collected by Jones to score his second and Westcliffs fourth try of the afternoon. At the break the home team held a promising 24-6 lead.

The third quarter brought no further scores despite the best efforts of both teams who continued to hammer away at each other with gusto and relish that occasionally needed to be tempered by a word or two of reproach and warning from the referee. Just after the hour mark Tring were rewarded for a patiently sustained multiple phase attack when the home side eventually ran out of defenders allowing a try to be scored in the far-left hand corner. At 24-11 Tring were back within two converted tries and remained hugely committed. So too though did Westcliff who retained control and field position and inside the games final 10 minutes scored further tries through

Billy Marrant, his second, and Spivey who finished a flowing backs move to touch down and seal a fine 38-11 victory.

Bouncing back after a disappointing afternoon at Sutton was important and we are very satisfied with the response. It was a good performance today against a strong determined and capable team from Tring. I felt we contained their threat took our chances when we created or forced them and managed the game well so that I was rarely concerned about the final outcome. We exercised good control, and we scored some good tries through backs and forwards having changed some of our combinations and drawn on the extended squad. All in all a good days work and further evidence of the groups growing maturity. A couple more results like this and we will in my reckoning be safe, after that who knows.

Next week we visit Bedford Athletic for the first time and will be taking our 2nd XV for a friendly fixture to. A potential banana skin against an improving side on their brand new AGP we will need once more to be on our mettle.

Bannister, Brown, Reynolds, Jones, Merrick, Mckeith, Spivey, Weston, B Marrant, Dellas, Dartnell, Edwards, Vandermolen, Hatton, Smith REP Maloney, Marsh, H Marrant