

## **Bournemouth 39 Westcliff 12**

With injuries and unavailability's continuing to blight selection, the squad contained once more several changes for the trip to Bournemouth. Along with various positional changes, recalled to the squad, were Dartnell, Webber, Hogarth, Reynolds, and Kwassi. Additionally, on the bench there was a first appearance for a couple of seasons for Conor O'Brien who was joined by Jon Marsh. The trip to Dorset was made through driving wind and rain and the pitch on arrival was predictably heavy and wet.

The conditions less than ideal, the game nevertheless commenced at a pace, the home team pressing hard, the visitors defending manfully. The game ebbed and flowed with each side seeking to create openings without quite managing it. Bournemouth gained better advantage and momentum from the kicking exchanges and opened the scoring after 10 minutes through a penalty and extended their lead through a converted try from their winger after 23 minutes. Trailing 10-0, Westcliff made significant inroads for the first time as the half wore on and despite being dragged down just short on a number of occasions, they finally scored from short range through prop Binneman. Bolton converted to bring the score to 10-7. Frustratingly Vandermolen who had been struggling with a knock, had to leave the field and when the game restarted with a scrum the rearranged pack conceded a penalty which was converted with the final kick of the half. The sides headed in for the break with the hosts 13-7 up.

The opening 10 minutes of the second period were keenly contested and relatively even but once Bournemouth had scored a further try through their opposite winger on 52 minutes, the wheels came off and two more converted tries followed in rapid succession. Trailing now 34-7 the game was over as a contest, Westcliff rallied briefly to score a second try through Sam Reynolds but the hosts had the last say as time played out and they added a fifth try in the closing minutes to record a resounding 39-12 victory.

It was a tough day at the office, we didn't play the conditions well and lost our way in the second half. Apart from a few lessons about how, and where, to play what kind of game, its one to put behind us and move on. Its no secret our squad has been stretched in the last couple of weeks and we have not been at our best. All teams go through such periods and it is down to us to cope and grow through it. Already we are looking forward to the first time visit of Taunton next week and minds will be firmly focussed on that at training this week.

H Marrant, Kwassi, B Reynolds, Whiting, Hogarth, Croft, Bolton, Meakin, Lynch, Binneman, Scogings, Dartnell, Vandermolen, Webber, S Reynolds REP Binstead, C Marsh, J Marsh, B Marrant, O'Brien