

## Leicester Lions 45 Westcliff 10

The first game of the new year for Westcliff came too soon for Billy Marrant and Jack Hogarth who had missed the previous game through injury. Joining them since that game through injury, illness and unavailability were Vandermolen, Johnson, Bolton, Parmenter Croft and Barrett. Recalled to the squad were Dartnell, Hughes, and Radezvicus who were also joined by Jim Smith and Jake Spivey both returning to the club after short breaks away and Myles Bean who debuted on the wing.

Westcliffs first visit to the Lions was made on a chilly grey afternoon with a breeze blowing across the pitch which was dry but soft underfoot. The opening ten minutes were keenly and evenly contested with Westcliff drawing first blood through Banister who converted a penalty awarded after a high midfield tackle. However, after 11 minutes Lions winger Devon Constant collected a kick and chipped the ball back chasing and recovering it in space to allow him to score a try which was converted. They returned with another converted try from the restart and for the rest of the half Westcliff wilted under sustained pressure that yielded a further four tries and a commanding 40-3 lead at the break.

The second half was a much more competitive affair and there were no further scores in the third quarter. The Lions did break through again after 62 minutes to extend the lead to 45-3 but Westcliff continued to apply themselves and with ten minutes or so left scored through Jake Campey a try which Bannister converted. The rest of the game saw Westcliff consistently on the front foot for the first time and they forced a couple of opportunities for further scores which were frustrated by last ditch defence, before crossing again in the games final play. Henry Marrant was on hand to touch down after the ball was lost at the base of a defensive scrum, unfortunately after consultation with the touch judge and with more than a hint of uncertainty the referee ruled a knock on and brought the game to a close at 45-10.

It was a disappointing performance there is no getting away from it or any desire to do so. Whilst we are happy to credit the lads for the second half improvement, the first half was not good enough, not by a long way. That is something we will review and address between now and next week when we commence a pivotal block of games against the teams around us in the league table.

B Jones, Bean, Campey, B Reynolds, Radezvicus, Bannister, Spivey, Dellas, Lynch, Binneman, Scogings, Dartnell, Webber, Reynolds, Smith REP H Marrant, Weston, Marsh, Hopkins, Hughes.