

## **Taunton Titans 43 Westcliff 10**

Westcliff travelled to the west country for a first ever visit to Taunton Titans knowing they were catching an established Level 4 team in fine form, challenging for promotion, and as it transpired at full strength. The visitors were again without skipper Dartnell, but also unavailable for the clash from the previous week were Jones and Ford. Their places in the squad were taken by Cummins and Webber, the former starting the game at fly half, the later taking a place on the bench. They set off and arrived after a predictably early start at a bright but breezy Towergate Stadium.

The hosts had the wind at their backs and hit the ground running, forcing the early pace and stressing the Westcliff defence. After just two minutes they muscled over through a driving maul and by the end of the first quarter had added two more tries wide out through their left winger. Each touchline conversion was struck sweetly making skilful use of the prevailing wind to carry the ball confidently between the uprights. Westcliff trailed 21-0 with sixty minutes to play and had struggled to get any foothold in the game. Another converted score for the hosts followed before they were able to respond with a try from Chris Marsh the last score of the half though went to the Titans and they led 33-5 at the break.

Westcliff no longer had the gale in their face, the contest was more even and the scores less frequent. It took nearly 20 minutes for the first to arrive, again it was from the home team, and another followed shortly after, their lead extended to 43-5 with a little less than twenty to go. The Westcliff line remained intact for the rest of the game and indeed they had the last word with a well taken try from Bannister. The game finished 43-10 a convincing and deserved victory for the Titans but a contest as well in which Westcliff had played their part and displayed dogged commitment throughout.

It was a tough day for the lads, the sort of afternoon we knew we would have now and then when the club progressed to this level for the first time. Taunton were good value for the win, their team was peppered with quality, experience and power, and when they turned to the bench they had more of the same. Nevertheless, our guys really put in a shift and the performance overall was pleasing in terms of the effort and commitment shown. No time or need to reflect on it any further than that, it's all about next week now and the visit of Worthing Raiders.

Bannister, Hogarth, Campey, B Reynolds, Bean, Cummins, Spivey, Weston, Marrant, Binneman, Scogings, Vandermolen, Marsh, S Reynolds, Smith REP Bolton, Webber, Dellas, Johnson, Lynch