

Westcliff 10 Barnes 52

Rugby returned to The Gables after a month long hiatus with the visit of mid table and in form Barnes. Into the starting XV came Brown, Doyle, Scogings, Walker, Comber and on the wing, debutant Sherif Olanrewaju. Returning to the bench were Dane, Meakin and Dufficy.

Conditions at kick off were grey and overcast but dry with only a modest breeze. Westcliff started well and although their very first probing's failed to bare fruit patience and perseverance soon brought reward when skipper Bannister broke the defensive line to score an early try he subsequently converted. The visitors quickly reduced the arrears through a penalty and for the next twenty minutes the efforts of both sides were unrewarded despite best efforts. There was however a sense that Barnes were starting to carry more threat and after 33 minutes Mason Nicholls was invited to take a ten minute breather after a maul was collapsed. From the resultant penalty and lineout Barnes drove over and they hit the front after the conversion 7-10. They proceeded to take maximum advantage of their numerical supremacy and scored two further converted tries before the end of the half.

The complexion of the game had dramatically changed and although after the restart Westcliff were first to score through the boot of Bannister all their further efforts came to nothing. Instead Barnes increased their grip and control of the game scoring a further four converted tries to secure a convincing win, which although the final 10-52 score line may have flattered a little, was fully deserved.

It was another tough encounter which at this level they all are, but as always the lads showed up with full commitment and effort. Despite the difficulties they have faced its very evident that the group has grown and continues to improve. That progression will soon reap reward and the next opportunity will come when we travel to Henley next week.

Bannister, Olanrewaju, Hogarth, Slater, Ajeigbe, Gladdish, Comber, Brown, Lynch, Binneman, Doyle, Scogings, Nicholls, Walker, Smith REP H Marrant, Dufficy, Dane, B Marrant, Meakin