

COLCHESTER 22 – DISS 15

Colchester ground out a hard earned victory against a tough Diss side, their third consecutive win of the new season proving the most difficult so far.



Matthew Morgan's clean lineout win sets Colchester on the attack against a strong Diss side

Diss brought a bigger pack and pacey backs with experience of playing National League rugby last season. Organised in defence and quick to counter, Diss pressed throughout to disrupt the younger Colchester side.

Colchester struggled to find their early season form in a misfiring first half. Player injury and unavailability saw six changes from the side that started against Bury St. Edmunds the previous week but Coach Tim Grimsey's halftime team talk and second half improved performance earned Colchester a deserved win.

The game started with a first minute try. Diss kicked off, Colchester flanker Dan Whitman started what was to be a man of the match performance by side stepping and bursting into space behind the Diss pack, linking with lock Ollie White who sprinted 40 metres for the opening try. Chris Withers added the conversion.

Colchester lost concentration, the Diss pack bossing the home forwards, their rolling maul rumbling slowly but gainfully forward. After ten minutes Colchester suffered the loss of inspirational skipper James Mitchell to injury.



Diss' forwards favoured pick and drive attack

Diss put points on the board with a penalty for obstruction kicked by full back Chris Beard. Continued pressure saw Colchester concede penalties, one kicked to touch within five metres of the line, Diss' resulting lineout catch and drive grounded for a try by prop Tim Groom.

Trying to force their game led to Colchester errors exploited by the visitors. A clearance kick was returned by the busy and hard running Beard who fed centre Matt Gardner for a try, Beard converting to give Diss the lead 7 - 15 held to halftime.

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Chris Withers launches a Colchester attack



Owen Herbert awaits the airborne pass to attack Diss

Although it was the same Colchester players who started the second half it was a more determined and better organised team who returned. Diss tried to outmuscle the home side, No. 8 Deaglan Hall making repeated carries, but the Colchester forwards defended staunchly and used their greater speed to win turnover ball and counter, Whiteman and hooker Matt Adamson prominent at breakdowns. Forced on the defensive, Diss began to concede penalties, Withers reducing the deficit with a kick.

An energised Colchester began to dominate play, backs James Denham, Damien Brambley and Jon Vine driving the Diss line back. Whiteman and No. 8 Matthew Morgan made a break, the ball quickly recycled wide right where Joe MacMillan offloaded to fellow prop James Balfour who levelled the scores with his first try for the club.

Superior fitness told. Morgan broke down the right, dragging tacklers with him before rounding off a team attack to score on the left, Withers adding the conversion for the 22 – 15 lead with ten minutes to go.

Colchester were forced onto the defensive in the last ten minutes as first Denham then Morgan were sin-binned for obstruction. Diss wasted ball on forward pick-and-go drives that only inched forward, eventually spreading the ball wide to their overlap where wing Aaron Bliss was denied a try by Jon Vine's saving tackle, the infield pass to three supporting Diss players intercepted by Colchester's Owen Herbert who kicked clear. Colchester's thirteen held out for the win.



Diss gang tackle but Joe MacMillan clears out

COLCHESTER	22 - 15	DISS
Ollie White		Tim Groom
James Balfour	<i>Tries</i>	Matt Gardner
Matthew Morgan		
Chris Withers (2)	<i>Cons</i>	Chris Beard
Chris Withers (1)	<i>Pens</i>	Chris Beard