

COLCHESTER 55 – ROCHFORD HUNDRED 22

Colchester rocked Rochford Hundred to record their sixth victory this season and extend their lead at the top of London North Division One to seven points. Colchester scored eight of the eleven tries in this free flowing game that entertained an appreciative audience at Mill Road.



Chris Withers leads a Colchester attack against Rochford

Promoted as champions last season, Rochford showed flashes of attacking form, skipper Tom Ashton bagging a try, working hard at centre with Matthew Stuart to maintain Rochford's attacks.

The drizzling autumn rain made the ball slippery, but Colchester ran the ball and mixed their attacks with forward surges and fast paced back moves. Young scrumhalf Lewis Groves gave a man of the match performance as lynchpin launching numerous Colchester attacks. Flanker Charlie Thorogood enjoyed one of his best games for Colchester, Matthew Morgan impressed in a move from the back to the second row, centre James Denham bowled opponents over whilst prop Ryan Zeitsman crowned his first start with a try.

Colchester once again started well. A Rochford scrum was pressured by the Colchester pack, Thorogood pouncing on loose ball which was quickly sped wide where fullback Dave Philp scored a try. The game ebbed and flowed for the next twenty minutes as Colchester dominated possession but only extended their lead after Rochford were penalised for preventing release, Colchester outside half Chris Withers slotted the conversion.



Lewis Groves readies to launch another Colchester attack

From the restart, Withers cut through the Rochford line. A rushed clearance kick was returned by Colchester No. 8 Gareth Jones who linked with lock Liam Pickett before Damien Brambley rounded his opponent for a try, Withers adding the touchline conversion.

Rochford's restart kick was again returned with interest, Colchester wing Lawrence Tapper's try disallowed for a foot in touch. The Colchester pack won the resultant lineout and Zeitsman forced his way over for an unconverted try.

Rochford replied with a penalty from Robert Prior on halftime to trail 20 - 3.

Halftime ~ Colchester 20 – Rochford 03

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Damien Brambley speeds past a Rochford defender

The second half saw a ding-done exchange of tries. Rochford started with an intercepted pass for Stuart to run in a try from halfway. Groves' fast and accurate pass assisted Withers cutting inside the visitor's defence to score Colchester's fourth bonus point try under the posts, easing his conversion.

Dan Whiteman now returned the Rochford restart, skipper Calum Irvine's angled kick along the ground sat up for winger Damien Brambley to take at speed and cross under the posts for his second try, Withers converting.

Rochford's never say die attitude was rewarded with another breakaway try, Ashton & Stuart combining for supporting prop Scot Chivers to score, Prior converting.

Tapper then stormed in for a Colchester try, set up by Brambley's crossfield run, after which Colchester appeared to sit back at 41 – 15, allowing Rochford to besiege their line. Whiteman was sin-binned by referee Mick Beech for persistent offending, Rochford using their extra man advantage for Ashton to cross for a try he converted.

Being reduced to fourteen revitalised Colchester. Replacement centre Adam Cook worked a loop to cross under the posts. Hooker Matt Adamson took a Rochford lineout to set up Brambley for another run that bisected the Rochford defence, skipper Irvine finishing the move with another try under the posts before Withers' conversion ended the game.



Callum Irvine offloads to keep the attack moving



Matt Morgan robs a Rochford lineout

COLCHESTER	55 - 22	ROCHFORD HUNDRED
Dave Philp, Damien Brambley (2), Ryan Zeitsman, Chris Withers, Lawrence Tapper Adam Cook, Callum Irvine	Tries	Matthew Stuart, Scott Chivers, Tom Ashton
Chris Withers (6)	Conversions	Robert Prior (2)
Chris Withers (1)	Penalties	Robert Prior (1)