

Rugby Union London North Division One
Saturday 15th October 2011

THURROCK 36 – COLCHESTER 13

Colchester surrendered their undefeated record this season to a well organised Thurrock side yet remain top of the table following six sequential league wins - but the teams trailing closed the gap to two points.



Dan Whiteman chases Chris Wither's kick as Thurrock play spot the ball in the bright sunshine

Thurrock thoroughly deserved their win, playing the expansive fifteen man rugby that Colchester has played all season. Their back row was prominent in the loose, slowing down and turning over Colchester possession with the pack protecting their own ball. The scrums were keenly contested early on and the home side pilfered several Colchester lineouts. Thurrock's fast backs scored three well manufactured tries with a late bonus point try from the forwards, centre Michael Stanley scoring twenty-six points.

Colchester failed to show their early season form, denied the possession they needed by their hosts. Colchester No. 8 Gareth Jones impressed with ball in hand and scored Colchester's only try, and Flanker Dan Whiteman made several breaks but was too often isolated. Centre James Crozier, returning from a spell playing in the National Leagues, linked well with skipper Callum Irvine but they found the Thurrock defence well organised.

Referee George Pace struggled and his quixotic decisions bewildered both sides alike. Sterner discipline early on could have avoided the brawl that erupted late in the game and led to a yellow card for Thurrock replacement Sebastian Rate.

Early Thurrock pressure led to a retreating Colchester defence conceding penalties, Michael Stanley converting two. Colchester replied in kind, a break by Dan Whiteman leading to a penalty for handling in the ruck, Chris Withers converting, narrowly missing a second penalty.

Colchester were penalised for handling in a ruck and Thurrock kicked to touch, their lineout catch and drive defended until the ball was spun wide, Stanley speeding through a gap in the Colchester defence for a try.

Gareth Jones picked up from the base of a scrum and charged into the Thurrock half where the ball was spilled. Thurrock counterattacked quickly, Captain and fullback Darryl Winter joining the line to cut through the visitor's defence for a try.

The Thurrock forwards rumbled forward through several phases, earning a penalty for offside that Stanley converted for three points and the 19 – 3 halftime lead.

Rugby Union London North Division One
Saturday 15th October 2011

THURROCK 36 – COLCHESTER 13



Chris Withers & Callum Irvine try a switch against Thurrock

Colchester attacked from the restart, Irvine and Crozier breaking to near the Thurrock line before the ball was lost. Jones made another powerful charge in midfield where Thurrock were penalised for not releasing and Withers kicked the penalty.

Thurrock responded with a series of forward surges, flyhalf Ian Rudgey's well executed chip over the Colchester defence recovered at speed by Stanley for his second try under the posts that eased his conversion.

Colchester's forwards began disrupting the home scrum, concerted pressure leading to a penalty near the posts which they took as a scrum. The Colchester pack pushed the Thurrock pack close to their line where Jones picked up and drove over for a try, Withers adding the conversion.

Thurrock had the last word with a series of forward moves ending with lock Dritan 'Tani' Loke touching down, Stanley's conversion ending the game to the delight of the home team and supporters.



Gareth Jones hangs onto the ball following his try for Colchester

THURROCK	36 - 13	COLCHESTER
Michael Stanley (2), Darryl Winter, Dristan Loke	<i>Tries</i>	Gareth Jones
Michael Stanley (2)	<i>Conversions</i>	Chris Withers
Michael Stanley (4)	<i>Penalties</i>	Chris Withers (2)

Match report by Gary Griffiths, Colchester RFC