

RUGBY UNION LONDON NORTH LEAGUE ONE MATCH REPORT

Saturday 28th January 2012

ROCHFORD HUNDRED 17: COLCHESTER 16

Colchester surrendered a halftime lead to lose by a point to a determined Rochford Hundred side playing rugby that belied their lowly league position, playing with a determination and control that suggested they will move up the league. Missed chances will haunt Colchester who need to work on their failure to contain the pick and drive one-dimensional rugby Rochford used to beat them in the second half.



James Crozier on the counterattack versus Rochford

The first half saw both sides keenly contesting every phase in an end to end rushed start that entertained the large crowd. Scrums were evenly matched but poor throwing cost Colchester lineout ball.

Early on Colchester pressed Rochford, forwards and backs linking to drive their hosts back. Tough tackles by Colchester centres Adam Cook and Callum Irvine dislodged Rochester ball.

Flanker Dan Whiteman raced to within a metre of the Rochford tryline where cynical holding on was penalised, Damien Brambley kicking the opening score.

Colchester will rue the two try scoring opportunities in ten minutes that were missed as both wings uncharacteristically knocked on passes as the undefended tryline beckoned.

Whiteman was sin binned for lying on the ball and Rochford used their man advantage to mount a series of attacks Colchester defended staunchly, breaking out when restored to fifteen. Cook pounced on a loose ball to set up a quick attack, support from Ollie Pickett and Joe McMillan moving the ball to lock Ollie White who crashed over for a try wide left, Brambley adding the difficult touchline conversion to end the half.



Louis Groves lines up a tackle as Rochford Attack the Colchester line

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Leading ten nil with a back line that threatened on nearly every attack, now playing down the slope plus with Rochford starting with fourteen men having lost their centre to the sin bin following an off the ball incident at the end of the first half, Colchester expected to extend their lead in the second half.



Brett Cutbush launches another Colchester attack against determined Rochford defence

Instead, Rochford changed tactics, their pack adopting tightly controlled rolling mauls to deny Colchester ball. The home forwards ground their way upfield, playing to the liberal interpretation of the referee towards the rule penalising players off their feet preventing release of the ball. Following over twenty phases of pick and go, prop Michael Mark dived for a try, flyhalf Kit Branch adding the conversion.

Colchester countered, Brambley chipped to the line where a clearance kick was charged down and hooker Charlie Thorogood grounded the ball – for the try to be disallowed for offside. The Rochford penalty clearance kick failed to find touch, scrumhalf Brett Cutbush spreading the ball wide where fullback James Crozier cut through the home defence until brought down near the line. Rochford were again penalised for preventing release and Brambley kicked the conversion.

Rochford made one of their few line breaks through the centre and Colchester were penalised for preventing release, Branch kicking the penalty.

The home pack revived their pick and go tactics, rumbling slowly forward, multiple phase recycling ending with flanker Tom Corbett crossing for a try, Branch adding the conversion to give Rochford the lead.

Colchester almost stole the lead back with a break by skipper James Mitchell and flanker Carl Jeffs but a foot in touch ruled out the score. Rochford played out the clock by tucking the ball up their jumpers until the final whistle.

ROCHFORD HUNDRED	17 – 16	COLCHESTER
Michael Mitch, Tom Corbett	<i>Tries</i>	Ollie White
Kit Branch (2)	<i>Conversions</i>	Damien Brambley
Kit Branch	<i>Penalties</i>	Damien Brambley (2)