

Alresford vs US Portsmouth
Match Report – 27th January 2018

ARFC travelled down the M27 in high winds and in constant rain, determined to restore some pride and respect after a disappointing Sandown outing, against a very good and undefeated US Portsmouth XV.

On their 4g pitch it was going to take a while to adapt to the balls pace off the surface. Ted maybe aware of this. From the kick off, the ball went straight out!

However, it soon became clear that words had been said and listened to in training and this was an ARFC that we have become accustomed to. Committed, passionate and talented.

With Sam Murrell (muzzer) leading by example, ARFC went at USP. With tackles going in low and hard and support play superb, the table toppers knew they were in for a hard match.

Despite ARFC dominating territory, and with Kato so nearly breaking through, we knew the underling threat from the opposition was there. Simply, we had opportunities to score, the first time USP did, in the 13th minute, they did score and converted. **0 -7**

Back came the boys and were really getting USP scratching their heads as if to say “they won't go away”. With the game flowing from 22 to 22 Jake saves the day with an awesome tackle to thwart USP just short. With every player standing up to what was presented in front of them, the likes of Billy Lovegrove, Sam, Pete Rogers (second row all game-no complaints!!) , Tom A and Hancock, Rob W were magnificent.

The backs weren't without their stars either. All across the back line everyone was doing their job.

With the weather worsening and USP pressure increasing, a penalty in the 26th min was conceded and scored. **0 - 8**

Elliot, on for the injured Mac, along with Ryan and Ethan, epitomized ARFC's spirit with hit after hit. On 30 minutes, Kato making his very solid debut so nearly went in at the corner. With the clock ticking down to half time and again ARFC pressing, one mistake and the ability of USP to take and convert any half chance to the maximum, saw them run the length of the pitch for a converted try.

HALF TIME: 0 - 15

The first 10 minutes after the restart ARFC were pretty much blown away by a now very fired up USP side. Quite quickly we were 29 points adrift.

But what credit to the boys, with energy levels sapping due to few replacements, the ARFC spirit rose again, and amongst others, Tom Brooks throwing himself at everything, ARFC knew this match was pretty much over in terms of winning but not over in terms of redeemed pride.

It took USP until the 67th min to extend their lead to a clear 36 points, and when many sides would wilt until the final whistle, ARFC seemed to grow in desire to get something this effort deserved.

In the 74th minute the effort was rewarded when Tom Andrews pushed over for such a well-deserved score, Ted converting from a ridiculous angle. **7 - 36**

Back came USP and despite heroic defense, scored with minutes remaining.

FINAL SCORE: 7 - 41

Match day Stars:

Tom Andrews, Chris Hancock, Rob Walls, Billy Lovegrove, Pete Rogers, Sam Murrell, Callum, Jake, AJ, Connall Cook, Ethan Green, Ryan Cooper, Alex(Guns), Kato, Mac, Elliot, Tom Brooks.

If I didn't mention your name, my apologies, you were all a credit to ARFC.

Man of the Match: Connall