

Alton vs Alresford
10th December 2016
Match Report

Alresford travelled to the Alton game missing a number of players and with Greg getting out of his sick bed on the morning of the match.

On a boggy pitch and drizzle in the air ARFC started brightly not allowing Alton out of their 22 for the first 5 minutes. Strong surges from the likes of Sam Batho and Shaun Memory helped keep Alton on the back foot. Eventually Alton began to find their feet and the next 20 minutes was evenly contested between two very physical and combative sides.

In the 28th minute Alton almost broke away but a fantastic tackle by James Boon saved the day. Two minutes later a run by Jack M put the pressure back on the hosts. In the 30th min ARFC were reduced to 10 with one of many decisions that had coaches scratching their heads and supporters voicing their opinions. 14 man ARFC rallied with some great defensive hits led by the again man mountain of tackling Shaun Memory.

In the 36th minute ARFC's desire and will power was rewarded when Pete Rogers scored to give ARFC the lead. However the lead was to last just 3 minutes as the 14 of ARFC just ran out of legs and Alton went over in the corner. On the stroke of half time Alton were awarded a penalty which ARFC helped make easier for their kicker with 10 yards given for an increasing amount of verbal frustration shown for some of the decisions.

HALF TIME

ALTON 8 – 5 ARFC

The second period started with ARFC restored to 15 and the imposing figure of replacement Billy Lovegrove in the backs. Much like the 1st half the game was fought fiercely with no quarter given and ARFC getting tackles in and putting bodies on the line in. The 55th minute saw Alton hit the upright from a penalty. With both sides so covered with mud it made it difficult to differentiate between the two sides, however in the 59th minute there was no problem spotting Billy making the sort of hard, fair tackle that was setting the tone for the game.

ARFC kept putting the pressure on and Alton's frustration peaked with a straight red for one of their players. A minute later in the 68th minute ARFC were awarded a penalty try which was kicked from the impressive Bertie Watley. Minutes later and with Alton really fired up Greg made an amazing try saving tackle. ARFC were now finding themselves under immense pressure but were so well led by Sam Batho and all of the boys encouraging and lifting each other.

In the 74th minute and with increasing darkness tempers boiled over into fisticuffs which was soon sorted by coaches and players. In the 76th minute Alton were awarded and kicked a penalty to make the score 11-12. With 5 minutes remaining and both sides not giving an inch ARFC were awarded a penalty 20 yards out which Bertie kicked. 11-15.

The last two minutes were played out in ARFC's 22 and the defensive work and commitment by every player was fascinating to watch. Eventually with 80 mins on the clock ARFC won their scrum, popped the ball to Shaun who in a mixture of agony and delight from cramp booted the ball into touch.

This may not have been a classic game of free flowing rugby but the conditions wouldn't allow that and this was a performance that showed whoever pulls on the jersey will give everything to achieve our goal, a tick in the win column and a step nearer promotion. Well done to every player and coach.

FINAL SCORE: ALTON 11 – 15 ALRESFORD RFC

MAN OF THE MATCH: BILLY LOVEGROVE