

Sunday November 18th

Warwickshire Shield Round One

Alcester 13 Shipston 12

Alcester ensured their weekend ended on a bright note, when they claimed a narrow victory to progress to the second round of the Shield, repeating last year's victory over the same opponents and at the same stage of the competition.

With all bar Alcester wing Sam Vernon having played for the 1st or 2nd XV the previous day, there were a few tired legs on show by the end of the game, particularly given the atrocious weather conditions that dogged the King's Coughton afternoon.

Starting up the slope and against the wind, Alcester enjoyed the better of the opening stages and led 8-0 at the break. Vernon's fresh legs proved decisive in the first try, rounding off a move which started with a no 8 pick up from the back of the scrum and good hands to find Vernon in space to score.

Prop Matt Bolton increased Alcester's lead with a now familiar bazooka of a penalty kick at goal, going one better than his opposite number who failed with Shipston's only kickable penalty of the half. The home side had to withstand sustained pressure from the "Rams" before half time, but held out to turn around with the half time lead.

Alcester increased their lead in the second half, thanks to skipper Scott Carmichael's try, following a trademark bulldozing run from just outside the twenty two.

Shipston fought back in the closing stages, scoring two tries of their own and nearly snatching victory at the death, as they scored their second try on the final whistle only to fail with the conversion from wide out that would have won the game.

Alcester skipper Carmichael praised his side for bouncing back from the disappointment of yesterday, and singled out the performance of rookie hooker Steve Wade, making his first senior start in a position that he only played for the first time earlier this season.

The King's Coughton men will aim to build on Sunday's performance for next week's return to league action and the trip to league high fliers Upton on Severn. Kick off is 2.15pm.