

ALCESTER RFC MATCH REPORTS

Saturday 10th October 2009

Midlands Division Four West (South)

Alcester 35 Birmingham Exiles 5

Alcester made it two wins from two league matches, confirming their encouraging start to the season, thanks mainly to a commanding second half performance against fellow promoted side Birmingham Exiles.

The visitors arrived early and were definitely up for the encounter, which showed in their start to the game, where they dominated the opening exchanges and went in front inside the first few minutes through a well worked try in the corner. They had another opportunity to put more points on the board a few moments later, but their kicker dragged his penalty attempt wide, after Alcester had been penalised for holding on at a tackle.

After weathering the early visitors pressure, Alcester began to get on top in the set phases which provided their back line with plenty of ball, although the breakdown contest was being very keenly fought which led to numerous turnovers and somewhat scrappy periods of play.

Territorially the Kings Coughton men enjoyed the better of the half playing up the slope, but it looked as though they would have to settle for a narrow first half deficit, until a moment of magic came from blind side flanker Ed Hartley, just before the half time break. The young back rower stole possession from two opponents, just inside his own half, before wriggling free of their clutches and showing a great turn of speed to sprint clear from the half way line to score under the posts, marking a superb way to score his maiden 1st XV try. Wing Max Biltcliffe converted to give his side a half time lead.

With the slope and slight breeze at their backs in the second half, it didn't take long for the home side to regain the initiative and cheered on by their decent sized home following (most of whom were now well fuelled following the earlier jubilee celebration lunch for past officials, life members and players from the original sides 50 years ago) they scored a second try, thanks to an excellent effort from the ever powerful Meka Pieri, who came on as a substitute towards the end of the first half. Biltcliffe added the extras, before he slotted over a penalty a few minutes later.

With the home pack now well on top, Alcester played their best rugby of the afternoon with forwards and backs combining well in several forays deep into the visitors' territory. The try of the game followed shortly afterwards. Pieri picked up from his no 8 position at the back of the scrum, and powered through two attempted tackles as he broke towards the right hand side of the field. When the Exiles managed to haul him back, he found fly half Andy Smith up in support and he injected more pace in to the attack before feeding open side Jim Watson who rounded off a fine move.

Left wing Biltcliffe was next to cross the line, with a powerful finish blasting through three attempted tackles as he scored out wide, before the impressive Smith ghosted in for a fifth try for his side in the closing stages. There was still time for Biltcliffe to add another penalty to bring his personal tally to 15 points for the afternoon and rounding off a good display for his side.

Coach Steve Lea was happy when he told his side that realistically that could not have started the league campaign better, but he also reminded them that much tougher tests are to come, starting with next week's trip to Coventry Welsh who have also started the season with two wins, and are always involved in the promotion reckoning at this level. Kick off at Burbages Lane in Holbrooks, near to Coventry City's Ricoh Arena, is 3pm.

Alcester Jubilee Dinner

There are still places available as Alcester hold one of their many special events of their Golden Jubilee season on Saturday 24th October, in the form of a jubilee dinner at the Greig Hall in the town. Former England international prop forward Jeff Probyn will be the main speaker for the evening, supported by another England international and current Worcester Warriors captain, Pat Sanderson.

Tickets which are very reasonably priced at £25 are available from Courtney Wells on 01789 763992 or Courtney@psw.co.uk Alternatively contact the clubhouse itself on 01789 764061 Admittance to the evening will be strictly by ticket only and a limited number are available on a first come, first served basis.