

## **ALCESTER RFC MATCH REPORTS**

**Saturday 10th April 2010**

**Midlands Division Four West (South)**

**Stoke Old Boys 19 Alcester 15**

Alcester's league campaign ended in defeat in the Binley area of Coventry, as they succumbed to a pumped up and determined home side, in front of a sizeable crowd of their VP's and other invited guests, on an emotional afternoon at Albert Gale field.

Stoke, battling for survival at this level, swarmed all over the visitors in the opening minutes of the game and after having one effort disallowed because of a knock on in the approach to the line, they deservedly took the lead thanks to a try via their left winger as a shell shocked Alcester had a failed to get going in the game.

Following the successful conversion of the try, and now seven points behind, Alcester sprung into life and their first sustained period of possession in the game, resulted in a penalty following an obstruction on a visiting player. Fly half Martin Gurr slotted over the kick, to put his side on the score board.

By now the visiting pack had managed to get a foot hold in the game, after the early pressure they were put under by the home pack, and with both teams now securing their own ball the game moved into a fairly even phase with both defences busy quelling any attacking forays by their opposite numbers. Stoke had the clearest further scoring chance in this period with their kicker missing a penalty attempt, following an infringement at a ruck by the visitors.

As half time approached, Alcester launched their most incisive move of the half. Speedster Jimmy Watson, restored to his favoured open side berth for this game, seized on a gap in the home defence and jinked in and out of several other would be tacklers on a run that took him from his own twenty two metre line to the edge of the opposition's. As the defence managed to rein him in, he found his fellow youngster and outside half Gurr in support, who stormed over the line under the posts, before dusting himself down to slot over the extras. This was the final action of the half as referee Steve Challis blew his whistle with the visitors now 10-7 ahead.

The red and blacks replaced full back Ollie Braley, who had taken a bang to the head, with club captain Scott Carmichael at half time, the Alcester talisman having rested in the first half following a cut head he sustained in last week's home defeat to Coventry Welsh.

In the opening moments of the half the visitors increased their lead with another try following good work at the line out from their forwards. Clean ball was taken at the front and the pack drove on to five metres out. Hooker Brett Allard broke from the back of the now stationery maul, before finding no 8 Mika Pieri who powered over from short range.

An injury in the Alcester backs forced a reshuffle with Allard moving into the centre and player coach Steve Lea coming on as substitute in the front row in a move which saw loose head Lorne Currie replaced Allard at hooker.

With the wind at their backs and now playing into the heaviest part of the field, Alcester were enjoying much the better of things, but roared on by their support the home side found a way back in to the game and scored through their inside centre. The Old Boys fly half was unlucky with his conversion kick as it smacked back off the upright to leave his side trailing 15-12 now in the final quarter of the game.

Sensing a victory that had looked unlikely earlier in the half, the home side camped on the visitor's line for a sustained period and eventually the pressure told when their inside centre doubled his tally with what proved to be a match winning score, which was converted.

Alcester were left to reflect on a disappointing afternoon, but overall the season has been a positive one with several younger players making their first team bow and a mid table position following promotion, which is a good effort in their first season back at this level.

In their final scheduled action of the season, Alcester host local rivals Five Ways Old Edwardians for a friendly at Kings Coughton on Saturday. Kick off is 3pm, followed later by annual end of season players presentation and awards evening which starts at 7pm at the club house.