

## **ALCESTER RFC MATCH REPORTS**

**Saturday 13th February 2010  
Midlands Division Four West (South)**

### **Keresley 23 Alcester 10**

Despite the scoreline maybe suggesting otherwise, Alcester came close to causing an upset against high flying Keresley, often dominating play in this tough test.

Playing into a surprisingly stiff wind, Alcester were competitive from the first whistle, causing disruption in broken play and not allowing the home side any time to settle early on. Early exchanges saw both sides playing some flowing Rugby up and down the length of the field, without the cutting edge required to break the deadlock, with Keresley taking the upper hand at the scrummage, and Alcester looking the more dangerous in open play.

Alcester settled the better of the two sides following these early exchanges, and turned this into a points advantage following an excellent flowing move seeing several well constructed phases slowly break down the hosts defence. Tying the home defenders in though some good forward play, the shift in attack to the Alcester backs saw flanker Jim Watson scoring the try, as a result of an Andy Smith kick through from 15 yards out bouncing off the foot of the post following good interpassing between the Alcester backs. Max Biltcliff was unfortunate in have his conversion attempt charged down, with a heavy suspicion of offside from the successful defender.

Alcester continued to frustrate their hosts for long periods, playing some entertaining and flowing Rugby, and had 2 further difficult penalty chances to increase their lead, both of which were missed by the boot of Biltcliff. Despite Alcester's periods of pressure, Keresley benefitted from a lapse in Alcester's defensive concentration to score wide out left to tie the score at 5-5.

Playing with confidence, this seemed to bolster Alcester's resolve, and almost immediately fly half Andy Smith went on a fine 50 yard solo run seeing the home defence scrambling to prevent Alcester scoring. Now deep within Keresley territory, Alcester laid seige to the home line, with debutant winger Adam Beech coming inches short from giving Alcester the lead once again. From a resulting penalty 5 metres out, Scrum Half Robbie Parker darted towards the line, only to be cynically tripped by a Keresley defender, resulting in the home side being temporarily reduced to 14 men. Opting to kick the penalty proved unsuccessful as Biltcliff's effort drifted wide.

The second half began as the first had ended, with both sides threatening in an open encounter. Despite this, it was 15 minutes until the first clear points scoring opportunity which saw a Keresley penalty drifting wide after a period of pressure on Alcester's defence. Shortly after, Keresley assuredly edged up the field utilising their well drilled pack, resulting in good field position leading to a well taken drop goal by the home fly half.

With 15 minutes left, Alcester's efforts began to take their toll, with the away side beginning to look tired, allowing the home side to profit. A series of missed tackles allowed the home side deep into Alcester territory, resulting in a score wide left as Alcester simply ran out of defenders. Minutes later, the home advantage was increased when Andy Smith saw a kick charged down, allowing the home side in to score once again.

Alcester's, however, were not finished, and scored again through skipper Scott Carmichael, finishing a fine move from 50 metres involving the Alcester back line and some fine lines of running from his centre partner Ollie Brayley. Biltcliff missed a difficult opportunity to add the extra points from out wide.

As Alcester scrambled to try to snatch an unlikely victory with little time remaining, the home side sealed the points on the counter attack, running through the now tired Alcester defence which missed several tackling opportunities to stop the attack.

Despite the loss, Alcester looked to have regained the competitive edge that has recently eluded them, and shall take increased confidence from this performance into the all important run in.

Next Saturday sees Alcester take on Manor Park at Kings Coughton, kick off 2-15, in a game looking increasingly important in the battle to beat the drop.