

ALCESTER RFC MATCH REPORTS

Saturday 22nd March

Alcester 50 Wellesbourne 0

Alcester recorded a comprehensive win against their newest neighbours, who had given their hosts 2nd XV a similarly sound beating last year, hence the reason the 1st XV fixture was made. The home side were boosted by the return of their student contingent on Easter leave, and the three players in question were instrumental in the King's Coughton side's win.

Whilst the red and blacks were always on top, the visitors battled hard throughout and showed enough to suggest that they will be at least competitive next season when they enter the league structure in the division below the one that Alcester currently operate in.

Playing up the slope and in to the wind in the opening stages, the home side took the game to their visitors and were soon in front when one of their student trio, scrum half Ollie Chester, broke free to score. Another of the returnees, fly half Tim Rees, converted the try.

Full back Robbie Parker doubled Alcester's tally, which Rees again converted, before the afternoon's referee lost patience with the early advice being offered to him by Chester, and sent the young scrum half to the bin. The reduction in numbers did little to interrupt the home domination, although they did have to wait for his return to add to their score. Wing Sam Vernon finished off a flowing back line move, with a spectacular dive in the corner as the defence attempted to nudge him into touch.

With the home forwards well on top, particularly at the line out, where young flanker Luke Skidmore dominated proceedings as part of his all round fine game, the home side continued to press. Lock Dave Marriott pinched the visitors ball at a ruck, before setting off on a charge towards the Wellesbourne line, a run that culminated in him finding centre James Woodhams who had a clear run in to score. Rees again converted.

At half time Alcester replaced Parker with the third of their student contingent Matt Williams, a move which saw Rees move to full back and Williams take the fly half berth. The second half started in a similar vein to the first, and Vernon doubled his try tally with Williams taking over the kicking duties to add the extras.

Wellesbourne enjoyed their best period of the game in the quarter of an hour that followed, without ever threatening the home line, but they were struggling for any clean ball up front, with the home scrum now well on top and Skidmore still dominating proceedings at the line out.

Alcester added to their tally, when veteran no 8 Nick O'Connor, on as a substitute for Phil Birks, crashed over following a Brett Allard break which set up a maul near the visitors line. The try of the game followed when Williams timed his pass to perfection

to feed full back Rees running a good angle and showing an electric burst of pace to race clear to the line. Williams again converted.

Wing Stuart Whitehead rounded off the scoring collecting a chip kick from Woodhams to crash over the line, although he lost his feet when on a typically mazy run which looked likely to end in another score. This was one of a number of misses in the closing stages by the home side who should really have added to their score. The most glaring of which was a case of “jug avoidance” by Vernon who missed a “sitter” right in front of the posts by knocking on, when all he had to do was catch the pass and fall over to claim his hat trick. In fairness to the Alcester wing, he did the dutiful thing after the game, and got the jugs of beer in, to spare himself the ribbing he would have got from his team mates!

All in all this was a good warm up for the King’s Coughton men, ahead of more important matters and the return to league action against basement boys Tenbury Wells next week. Kick off at Alcester is 3pm.