

ALCESTER RFC MATCH REPORTS

Thursday 29th April 2010

Alcester 11 City Link Lions 20

The City Link side maintained their 100% record in this fixture, in the third playing of what has now become an annual charity match between the two sides, this year played in aid of the children's charity "Make a Wish."

The game itself had anything other than an end of season charity feel to it, with the game being competitive and sometimes fiercely fought throughout, whilst the overall spirit in which it was played remained good.

Alcester used all of their large squad that had assembled for this game, to ensure everyone got a game, whilst their opponents had drawn on employees from all over the country to form their side. Both teams were able to call on former professionals as guest players, with the home side boosted by former Gloucester stalwart Andy Deacon, for the second year running. Another former front rower bolstered the City Link ranks, as ex Leicester prop Derek Jelley started on the loose head side for the company team.

The home side had the better of the early exchanges without really dominating but only had a Jamie Randall penalty to show for their efforts. They continued to attack but were rocked back by a converted interception try for their opponents, a score by Tom Stokes which visibly lifted the side that had been brought together only for this game. With Alcester having made their first batch of changes, it was the City Link Lions that started to stamp their authority on the game, but Alcester regained the lead somewhat against the run of play thanks again to the trusty boot of Randall.

The remainder of the half belonged to the visitors and it was no more than they deserved when after a sustained period of forward drives and pressure near the home line, hooker Nick Walters crossed just before the whistle for a score which left them 12-6 ahead at the break.

In the early stages of the second half, the City Link side increased their lead with an audacious drop goal from range and wide out via man of the match and full back Mike Goldworthy's boot, one of the best drop goals that has been seen at Kings Coughton in recent years.

With Andy Deacon having joined the action at half time, Alcester began to reclaim the ascendancy and the former Gloucester player was instrumental in the run up to the home side's score, acting as the link man on no fewer than four occasions in the move that saw Stuart Whitehead round off the passage play with a try.

The competitive nature of the game led to one or two altercations mainly between the packs. Following one such incident City Link's Matt Brooks was singled out and yellow carded by referee Nick Edwards, after committing the late tackle which sparked the latest set of "handbags."

City Link were dealt a further blow when Jelley had to leave the field with a dislocated shoulder sustained in a tackle. He was replaced, but the visitors struggled to add the presence in the scrum that Jelley had brought and Alcester began to gain the advantage up front.

Now trailing 15-11 the home side went in search of the additional score to reclaim the lead in the game, but with time running out they were forced to run the ball from deep inside their own territory, as they were being out witted in the kicking game that had earlier developed between the two sides. In the greasy conditions the ball was spilled by the Alcester backs and City Link centre Jason Bryan reacted quickest to the loose ball before gathering and diving over the line for the winning score.

City Link captain Andrew Harden Sweetman, an Alcester RFC member, was presented with the trophy for the third season running to round off another thoroughly enjoyable evening for all involved which raised just over £1,000 for the Make a Wish charity. The event was marred only by the injury to Derek Jelley. Players from both sides and all at Alcester RFC and City Link wish him a speedy recovery.

Alcester vs. Moseley XV

On Thursday May 6th former Alcester coach and now Moseley Chief Executive Dave Warren is bringing a Moseley XV to play Alcester at Kings Coughton for a 7pm kick off. All are welcome to come and watch this rare meeting of the two red and blacks.

Alcester Fun Run 2010

Preparations are now well underway for next month's fun run, once again organised by Alcester RFC. Entrance details for the four mile run, jog or walk through the countryside surrounding Alcester on Sunday June 13th can be obtained from the club. For more details visit the Alcester RFC website www.alcesterrfc.co.uk.