

**Saturday April 4th 2009**

**Midlands Division Six West (South East)**

**Alcester 61 Warwickian 0**

Alcester guaranteed at least a promotion play off spot, with a second comprehensive victory of the season over the men from the county town.

In beautiful spring sunshine and on a very firm pitch, making for ideal running rugby conditions, Alcester started up the slope against the deceptively stiff breeze and against determined opponents who enjoyed the territorial advantage for periods of the first half. In fact midway through the half Alcester only led by a Max Biltcliffe penalty, although Jack Sears crossed for the home side's first try after they finally made their superiority out wide pay following several missed chances.

The visitors responded and they nearly reduced the deficit when their outside centre intercepted a pass deep inside his own half and raced clear towards the Alcester line, only to be hunted down by home speedster Stuart Whitehead as the attacker was in clear sight of the whitewash. The visitors enjoyed their best spell of the half from the moments that ensued and Alcester were glad to take the play to the other end of the field for centre Ollie Braley to double their try count.

With the elements at their back, and against seemingly tiring opponents, Alcester cut loose in the second half running in eight tries without reply. Their pack totally dominated set phase possession resulting in numerous opportunities to run the ball, and with their pod systems working well and with forwards and backs combining in open play, they played some of their best rugby of the season.

Replacement left wing, Rich Smith on as a half time substitute for Whitehead, scored with his first touch of the ball after the home side had created the overlap in attack. Prop Matt Bolton was the next to score from a powerful direct run at the heart of the visitors defence, before right wing Jack Sears doubled his try count showing great strength to elude the three defenders hanging off him as he reached the line.

Scrum half Robbie Parker scored the individual try of the game, picking up at the base of his scrum in the middle of the park and racing clear of the defence to score under the posts.

Prop Nev Teasdale drove over with his pack from a visitors throw in near their line that was pinched by skipper Phil Birks, before another replacement Dave Holt blazed over for a debut score. Fly half Andy Smith then rounded off another good team move for his side's ninth try.

Replacement prop Steve Lunn was determined that he would get his score, which meant that hooker Brett Allard was the only member of the front row four (including the replacement) not to score, despite being most prominent of all around the park. Allard was at the heart of most of the home side's attacking forward play and enjoyed one of his best games of the season.

Kicker Biltcliffe converted four of the second half tries despite not being at his best with the boot but with ball in hand and in defence he more than played his part in an all round great team effort. Unfortunately for Warwickian, something about playing them brings out the best in Alcester, as they certainly made coach Steve Lea's men work for everything they have got in both games this season. To their credit the visitors had a few opportunities in this game to kick for points in the second half, but elected to run from the penalties they got in Alcester territory, although they were met by very determined defence from a home side hoping to keep the points against to a minimum.

Alcester will take a break from action next week after scheduled final league opponents Coventry Tech have already backed out of the league fixture meaning the Kings Coughton men are awarded the points. They will be hoping that Atherstone claim an unlikely win at Rugby Welsh, which would hand Alcester the title were it to happen. Most likely is a home play off against the runners up of Midlands Six West (South West) with two or three sides still in contention for the visit to Kings Coughton on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Alcester have the better record of the two divisions which is why the home advantage is awarded to them.