

## **ALCESTER RFC MATCH REPORTS**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**Midlands Division Four West South**

**Evesham 33 Alcester 6**

Alcester slipped to a disappointing defeat against the league leaders, with a below par performance which prompted a rear guard action for most of the game.

The sides exchanged penalties in the opening stages, with Alcester's Max Biltcliffe responding well to the Evesham kicker's deadlock breaker a few moments earlier. From then on Evesham took over, with only a brief respite for Alcester when another well struck Biltcliffe penalty put more respectability on the score line when Evesham were 26-3 up. The home side could have been further in front, but they spurned several more chances for scores, through some spilled passes and good last ditch tackling by Alcester. Evesham had the shunt on Alcester at the scrum in the first half, which was the source for most of the game being played on the front foot by the Worcestershire side.

Early in the second half Alcester made changes with the late arriving Ed Hartley coming on for Dave Marriott in a move which saw Phil Birks move to the second row to accommodate Hartley, and player coach Steve Lea replacing Lorne Currie at tight head. The visitors had to do without Birks for ten minutes, after the referee adjudged that he came in from the side at a ruck. While he was away Evesham added a further score through a converted try.

Slowly, Alcester came back in to the game in the second period and although Evesham still looked most likely to score out wide, up front Alcester had begun to take over, in no small part thanks to the introduction of player coach Steve Lea. The veteran prop operating at tight head, was his usual powerful and abrasive self and he led from the front as his side fought back in the forwards, although they were struggling for any real cohesion in the backs.

The more competitive nature of the Alcester side in the second half, led to a few niggles, and back rower Hartley was sent to sin bin along with a home lock forward following an altercation near the touch line.

The rest of the game was competitive without a further score, although the home side came closest on two occasions when the home touch judges epitomised the spirit of rugby by showing superb sportsmanship on either wing. On both occasions the referee would have awarded the try without their intervention, due to one foot in touch and one dropped ball in the act of scoring.

The game ended without a further score and Alcester were left to reflect on a below par performance, although it was against an excellent Evesham side that look destined to be in the shake up for honours in the final league table at the end of the season.

League action returns to Kings Coughton next Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November, when Alcester entertain fifth placed Coventry side Keresley, who are level on points with them in the league table. President Steve Faulkner will be entertaining his guests ahead of the match, for his annual lunch. Kick off at Kings Coughton is 2.15pm.