

Saturday March 7th 2009

Stourport on Severn 5 Alcester 38

With scheduled league opponents Coventry Tech postponing their visit to Kings Coughton in midweek as they were unable to field a front row (this match will be rearranged) Alcester took the trip to Stourport from the fixture pool to resume rivalries against a side that were regular opponents before the formation of league rugby, but now rarely feature on the red and blacks fixture list.

Stourport, who were hosting their President's Lunch, operate a level above Alcester in the league structure, but one would not have known it from this showing as the visitors comprehensively outplayed their hosts, particularly up front where the red and blacks pack had the upper hand at the set phase.

The visitors took the lead with a penalty from full back Jamie Randall, before no 8 Mika Pieri broke from the back of a driving maul and powered over under the posts, allowing the near faultless Randall a straight forward conversion.

Randall missed his only kick of the afternoon from another penalty opportunity, before left wing Stuart Whitehead came within inches of extending his side's lead as he was tackled in to touch in the act of scoring. It was not long before the visitors scored again, with Pieri doubling both his own and his side's try tally with the score of the afternoon. The no 8 picked up and broke blind from the back of an advancing scrum, and he seemed to be afforded the freedom of Stourport by the home back row. By the time any defenders got near him he was into his full stride and he extended his telescopic arms to hand off the only two opponents that managed to lay a hand on him, before he powered over the line. Randall again converted to give his side a 17-0 half time lead.

The afternoon's referee, who otherwise had an excellent game, probably needed to take his watch in for repair as he played no less that 55 minutes in the first half, despite few injury breaks! It was only when one of the Stourport officials pointed out the time was nearly 3.25 from a 2.30 kick off, that he blew his whistle at the next break in play.

With the wind at their backs in the second half, the match continued in a similar vein with Alcester domination, as they were still enjoy the better of things at scrum and line out and with returning lock Dave Marriott setting off on a number of trademark bullocking runs, most of their rugby was played on the front foot. They were forced to play 10 minutes with fourteen men, however, when lock Andy Flynn was yellow carded for a high tackle on the home open side flanker although whilst he was away his side increased their lead, with a third try through flanker Jim Watson who capitalized on a mistake by the Stourport left wing to pounce on the loose ball over the try line. Randall slotted over the extras.

Flynn redeemed himself shortly after his return after he was on hand to finish off a move which began with another driving maul by the veteran lock and his fellow pack members,

before scrum half Robbie Parker took over with a familiar darting run which was halted only yards from the line, although he popped the ball up out of the tackle to his grateful second row forward to dive over.

Right wing Jack Sears rounded off the Alcester try scoring, breaking clear from his own half to score under the posts, allowing the trusty boot of Randall another straight forward conversion.

The hosts scored a try of their own shortly before the end of the game, when their most dangerous player on the left wing, outpaced the Alcester defence to score.

The visitors were pleased with this showing ahead of next week's return to league action where they play host to Atherstone. The red and blacks now lie third in the league table, after their league inactivity this weekend allowed Trinity Guild to leap frog them in to second place, although the red and blacks do have two games in hand on the Bagington men. Kick off at King's Coughton next week reverts to later time of 3pm.