

Saturday 3rd March 2007 – League

Opposition : Coventry Welsh

If ever there were two pairs of words that normally set the King's Coughton men up for a disappointing afternoon, they are Chairman's Lunch and Coventry Welsh, but this season's Alcester side are made of sterner stuff, and they got the better of their "bogey" side for the first time in several seasons with a win in front of Chairman Andy Miller's assembled guests for his annual lunch, despite never really hitting top gear.

As a significant number of games in the local area were lost to the weather, the King's Coughton ground that normally dries so well, also resembled a bog in parts, but the majority of the surface was playable, albeit extremely sticky, which contributed to the scrappy nature of the game.

Alcester started down the slope with the stiff breeze at their backs, and soon gained the ascendancy up front. They went close on three occasions through forward drives at the line, before the visitors broke up field and were awarded a penalty as the Alcester backs strayed offside at a ruck. The home side were relieved to see the kick drop short and were soon in their opponents territory again. When another forward drive was held up over the line, the home pack got the shunt on from the resulting scrum, and following a neat move from the base, right wing Andy Jones was set free to run in the simplest of scores in the corner.

Having been starved of any possession in the opening exchanges, the Welsh men got their game going and enjoyed their best period of the half, in which they reduced the deficit through a successful penalty conversion. Still the half belonged to Alcester, and although the unlucky Phil Birks, enjoying another excellent all round game, was not awarded a try as one of his team mates had strayed offside, despite Birks charging down a kick and pouncing on it over the try line, Alcester racked up another 8 points before the break, thanks to skipper Scott Carmichael's now customary score, and a successful penalty kick from Andy Smith, today operating on the left wing.

Turning around at half time against the elements, and in to the bright afternoon sun, the Alcester back three knew they would be in for some aerial bombardment, but they stood up well to the challenge. The visitors did enjoy their best period of the game in the opening fifteen minutes of the half, but despite their territorial domination, they were always under pressure at the set phase, most notably at the line out where the athletic Birks spoiled a number of Welsh throw ins. Coventry did force two further kickable penalty opportunities, but both attempts dropped short in conditions not at all conducive to goal kicking. Then somewhat against the run of play, Alcester scored a third try. A Welsh back line move was spilt in midfield and home outside centre John Dover, another Alcester man enjoying a fine game, reacted quickest to the loose ball to hack it away from danger and over the half way line. He won the chase to the ball again and showing great footballing skills, proceeded to kick the ball forward on a further three occasions, before winning the race to the ball over the try line to pounce and score.

As is befitting of a Coventry Welsh side, they never gave up, and they reduced the deficit with their first try, before Smith extended his side's lead with his second successful penalty.

Both sides had chances in the closing stages, before right on the whistle, the visitors charged down a home defensive clearance to score a further consolation try.

This was a good win for Alcester, a well overdue one against these opponents that consolidates the King's Coughton outfits third placed position in the league. They take a break from league action next week, as they host the University of Birmingham Medical Students "The Medics" in a rearrangement of the game that was postponed last month.

Result : Alcester 21 – Coventry Welsh 13