

Saturday 10th March 2007 – Friendly

Opposition : Birmingham Medics

Alcester's matches against the Medics often run to the same script, with the home side in front or in touch for 60 minutes, before the younger legs of the students kill the game off in the final quarter. Although the manner of the defeat followed suit, this was a game that Alcester should have won, after missing numerous try scoring chances in the opening quarter, as "try line fever" in particular amongst their dominant pack, took over.

The home side went behind straight from the start, as the Medics kicker converted a penalty after Alcester flanker Keith Beech was harshly adjudged to have taken a Medics forward out in the air, as he gathered the kick off that the home pack were slow to react to. This was the only dubious moment by former Alcester player and now society referee Pete Billings, who otherwise had a faultless and authoritative afternoon.

It wasn't long before Alcester's domination paid off and they took the lead. Centre Andy Smith, who an excellent all round game, was just wide with his first penalty attempt at goal, but the resulting twenty two metre drop out fell straight into the arms of home skipper Scott Carmichael, who bulldozed his way through several would be tackles, before running clear to score wide out left.

Wing Robbie Parker doubled his side's try tally with another well taken score, before Smith added another penalty to leave his side 13-3 clear at the break. Unfortunately the half was best remembered for the host of missed chances by Alcester, although in full credit to the students they stood up extremely well defensively against their bigger opponents.

With the slope in the second half the Medics forwards started to win more possession, and their efforts were rewarded with a try by their inside centre early on in the half. Midway through the period, a second unconverted try by the visitors levelled the scores, but this signalled a resurgence in the Alcester performance, and they enjoyed their best spell of the half in which Smith regained the lead for his side with another penalty.

With time running out, the Medics were awarded a throw at a line out deep in Alcester territory, and following a clean take at the front, the home pack were caught napping as the student eight elected to drive rather than give quick ball to their backs as they had throughout the afternoon. The visitors got unstoppable momentum from their maul and crashed over in the corner, a try that was brilliantly converted by their fly half from the touchline.

The King's Coughton men still had time to take play up field and they were met with stern defence as their forwards ran hard and straight at their opponents near the line. They too were awarded a line out on the five metre line following a penalty that was kicked to the corner by Carmichael, but they chose the wrong time to lose their first line out of the afternoon allowing the visitors to clear and win the game. Despite the disappointment of defeat, this was the closest the red and blacks have come to beating the Medics for many years, which Carmichael reminded his troops about at the end of the game. He also singled out the performances of debutantes John Ryan, at scrum half and former Dunlop lock Andy Spires for their good starts to their Alcester 1st XV careers.

Alcester hope to get their two or three rested players back for next week's important return to league action, and the visit to bottom side Bredon Star. Kick off is 3pm.

Result : Alcester 16 – Birmingham Medics 20