

## ALCESTER RFC UPDATE 1.9.07

### **Alcester 5 Shipston 17**

With scheduled opponents Harborne crying off on Thursday evening, Alcester made early use of the fixture pool for their first run out of the season. With Shipston's cup tie against Bedford Swifts being cancelled they became the first visitors to King's Coughton of the new campaign.

With a number of Alcester's regular squad still missing, and with this being the first run out of the new campaign, both sides agreed to make a four quarter game of twenty minutes to allow, principally the home side, chance to give all available players a run out.

Shipston started brightest and went in front inside the opening couple of minutes for a try that was converted and was the only score of the opening quarter.

They crossed the line again in the second quarter to increase their lead to 12-0, but only after Alcester's numbers were temporarily reduced due to a yellow card being issued by former Alcester chairman and qualified referee John Jones, the afternoons match official, who kindly agreed to don his green jersey again after the society were unable to allocate a referee to this fixture.

With Alcester using every opportunity to make changes to their personnel, the play was sometimes a little disjointed, no more so than at the line out where this normally solid area of Alcester's game let them down this afternoon, and they struggled to get any real clean possession throughout the afternoon.

The third quarter was a better one for the Kings Coughton men, but only after they were afforded a huge let off by the rams right winger, who had a clear run in to score, but mistook the five metre line for the try line and put the ball down short of where it needed to be allowing Alcester to clear the danger. This seemed to spur the home side on and they played some of their best rugby of the afternoon and managed to reduce the deficit. Alcester were awarded a scrum out wide on the right hand side of the field and deep in Shipston territory. No 8 Nick O'Connor broke blind from the back and linked well with scrum half James Woodhams, who set James Daffern free, and the flanker used his power well to shrug off an attempted tackle to power over the line. Young fly half James Randall narrowly missed the conversion attempt.

Shipston restored their advantage in the fourth quarter to run out deserved winners, but all at Alcester were pleased with their showing against a side that operate a division above them. There were a number of encouraging performances, which will allow for real competition for places when the currently missing players return from cricket season, work and other commitments. Stand in skipper singled out the performance of Woodhams, making his first ever start at scrum half as a stand in for the unavailable club skipper Scott Carmichael, as worthy of special mention.

Alcester have two more weeks of training and one more game, away to local rivals Redditch next Saturday, to finalise their preparations before league action begins and the visit to Midlands Five West South new boys Dudley Wasps.

## **World Cup Dinner – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

Alcester RFC are hosting a World Cup Dinner at the Greig Hall in Alcester on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Former England and British Lions lock forward and current coach and Sky pundit Nigel Redman is the evening's guest speaker. There will be other entertainment in the form of a stand up comic, after the four course meal. There are tickets still available and the event is open to all. Places can be reserved by calling Alcester club president Mike Edwards on 01789 764096.