Alqueria Unido
(The Team)

If football is a game of two halves then Alqueria Unido is a football team of split loyalties. Any football team representing a town with the social divisions of Alqueria must reflect those divisions. Five of the players are sponsored by Rodriguez's olive mill, Olivarera de Alqueria, these are the Newcomers Los Recién Llegados. A cooperative of shop keepers sponsor another five, these are the Hill People, El Gente del Cerro. The shop keepers are Pilar del Redondorodillas, she owns La Ferretería Pilar on the Calle del Siniestro and Nestor Clacketo, the baker. Blythe Gruntmore completes the team, Alqueria´s resident Englishman as goal keeper.

Alqueria Unido play in a red shirt with their sponsors name across the chest and the national flag on the sleeve. Five Alquerian strips carry the text 'Olivarera de Alqueria' and five carry the slogan 'Panaderos y Tenderos de Alqueria'. Rodriquez's five have the red, yellow and red tricolour of Spain on the right sleeve while the other five have the red, yellow and purple of the Second Republic on the left. Blythe, in goal has no sponsor or flag although he does have a hand drawn star on the chest of his shirt. A blue star, the one found on a particular brand of brown ale.

Managing such a team isn't easy, requiring a trainer for each of the factions. Antonio Poyato coaches the Hill People. Not the wisest of choices considering his liking for Remitroot Wine a surfeit of which can destroy one's reasoning. Before the start of one particularly important match he advised, "Equalise before the other team scores". He was suspected of being in his cups, this he confirmed by promptly falling over and remaining unconscious for the whole game. Roberto Robles manages the New Comers' portion of the team. His advice revolves around various ways of maiming the opposition without the referee seeing and nobbling the referee without the opposition knowing.

Alqueria Unido has won few matches. While the five of one faction attack the opposition's goal, the other faction would go on the defensive. Refusing to pass to each other is another obvious disadvantage. Due to their inability to work together it is not uncommon for two men to occupy the same position on the field. It is a splendid sight to see three players all tackling each other for the ball. Opposition sides become totally confused and on more than one occasion the referee has simply walked off leaving mayhem on the field as players implement Robles's advice.

Due to the reputation of the Unido, many teams simply refuse to play them. These byes have allowed the Alquerian side to reach the final for the *El Trofeo Desafío del Pueblos*, the Village Challenge Trophy. Although not totally welcomed, there were resignations from the governing body it was tolerated and preparations were duly made.