

**Saturday April 18th 2009**

**Droitwich 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 47 Alcester 24**

Alcester warmed up for next week's all important promotion play off with defeat against a youthful Droitwich 2<sup>nd</sup> XV, in a rare visit to the impressive surroundings of the Glyn Mitchell Memorial Ground.

Missing no fewer than six regulars and with Jason Donovan and Jamie Bowen making their debuts in the backs, Alcester struggled for cohesion throughout the afternoon against a well organized outfit. That said they were always competitive and scored some good tries, and their heavier and more experienced pack shunted their hosts around at the scrums and mauls.

The visitors started well and forced a penalty in the opening exchanges which Max Biltcliffe dragged wide. The home side fought back and took the lead with a try by their outside centre, who showed great pace in attack, not for the only time in the afternoon.

Alcester came close to scoring with a push over try from a scrum close to the home line, but the young referee was struggling with the interpretation of the 90 degree rule at the scrum phase and Droitwich were able to clear their lines. It was not long before the visitors were on the scoreboard however. Skipper Phil Birks took one of numerous excellent takes in the middle of the line out, and his pack drove on to the line. The home side managed to halt the charge five metres out, but scrum half Rich Smith showed great strength to force his way over, after electing to dart for the line rather than pass out to his backs, due mainly to the fact that he had one of his forwards in his way! Biltcliffe converted.

Droitwich regained the lead 25 minutes in with another try, before they crossed for their third score before the half hour. The end to end nature of the game continued as Alcester came close to scoring through flanker Aaron Mason, but from the scrum that followed this move, they marched their opponents back over the line at pace allowing no 8 Birks the easiest of "arm chair rides" to touch down at the back.

The home side scored a fourth unconverted try before half time to lead 20-12 at the break.

Alcester didn't start well after the break and they conceded a further two scores before their situation was made worse by the sin binning of lock Andy Flynn for a high tackle, although most observers commented after the game that the decision was harsh to say the least. Nevertheless the home side took full advantage running in another try and adding a conversion to lead 37-12 at this point.

Despite being a player down, Alcester refused to buckle and Biltcliffe crossed for the visitor's third try, before the home side's quickest player scored his second try from his outside centre position. Alcester hit back again when left wing Stuart Whitehead kicked ahead and took full advantage of a dreadful mix up in the home defence, to touch down near the posts allowing an easy conversion for Biltcliffe, before the home

side re established their healthy lead with the game's final score.

Alcester were pleased to have a run out after last week's inactivity, although the focus this week will be in ensuring they can get their strongest side possible out for the promotion play off game against Midlands Six West (South West) runners up Warley.

### **Midlands Six West Promotion Play Off – 25.4.09**

Alcester and Warley kick off at 3pm at Kings Coughton for the right to be promoted to Midlands Five level. Alcester have the home advantage in this one off game, due to their better league record over the duration of the regular season. All friends old and new will be welcome to come and support the promotion effort, and attend the end of season presentation and awards evening which follows at the club house on the same night. For more information on both visit [www.alcesterrfc.co.uk](http://www.alcesterrfc.co.uk)

### **Alcester Sevens – 26.4.09**

Alcester host their annual sevens tournament on Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup> at their Kings Coughton ground. All spectators are welcome with the bar, barbeque and other refreshments available all day. Eighteen teams have already confirmed their attendance, with others still to confirm and all entrants will be made most welcome, with registration from 10.30am. For more details about how to register for what promises to be another great end of season event, log on to [www.alcesterrfc.com](http://www.alcesterrfc.com).