

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007**

**Midlands Division Five West (South)**

**Alcester 0 Pinley 3**

Alcester's fears of facing a struggle against relegation in the second half of the season were confirmed, after another narrow and desperately disappointing home defeat against a typically feisty Pinley side.

In another even contest, Pinley enjoyed the better of things with the wind and slope at their backs in the first half, and although Alcester won more possession than in last week's defeat at Upton, the visitors used the elements well to keep play deep in Alcester territory for much of the half. Scoring opportunities were few and far between, and the visiting fly half and captain sent his only penalty chance of the half wide, before one of his colleagues did the same with a speculative drop goal attempt.

Alcester were forced to defend their line for the final ten minutes of the half, and a number of players put big hits in on their opposite numbers to protect their line. Throughout the game there was niggling under current to the play, and the afternoon's match official, who struggled to keep control of the non rugby side throughout the match, finally lost patience with the Pinley tight head and yellow carded him on the stroke of half time for an altercation following a ruck.

Turning around with the elements and a man advantage Alcester struggled to get any real cohesion in their play, and it was the men from Coventry who came closest to scoring. The play was mostly between both twenty twos and chances continued to be at a premium. The visitors were favouring the long cross field kicks in search of their wingers as their preferred route of attack, whilst Alcester tried to use their strength in the centre to find a way through.

The game remained scoreless entering the final five minutes, when Pinley were awarded another penalty, for offside at a ruck. This time the visiting kicker took his chance and Alcester had little time to reverse the score line.

They did try and monopolised the closing stages, forcing three penalties well inside the visitors half in quick succession but too far wide to present a real opportunity at goal. Instead they elected to run at their opponents, who were prepared to use all means fair and foul to keep their hosts at bay. The final moments of the game ended with another Pinley player in the sin bin, this time their hooker, for throwing a punch at an Alcester forward.

The whistle to end the game arrived after yet more fisty cuffs, and more disappointment for Alcester who have now lost their fourth game of the season by less than one converted score and their sixth by less than two. They have a break from league action next week and will be seeking opposition from the fixture pool. The following week they visit basement boys Tenbury for a must win league game. Both kick offs are 2.15pm.