

Saturday 24th November 2007

Midlands Division Five West (South)

Upton on Severn 7 Alcester 0

In what is fast becoming the theme for the season so far, Alcester slipped to another narrow defeat in a game they could and should have won, despite the depleted nature of their squad which saw them unable to field a second XV this week, having lost nine players to injury in the last fortnight.

With the Upton side still without a fully functioning clubhouse following the effect of the summer floods, the visitors expected the pitch to resemble a bog following more recent rain, but they actually found a decent, albeit somewhat sticky playing surface, which should have allowed for free running rugby. Actually the game was a very keenly fought, sometimes scrappy affair mainly played in the middle of the park, with few chances at either end. Alcester enjoyed the better of the territory, but once again their possession wasn't clean from the set phase, particularly at the line out where the visitors really struggled through out the afternoon following the recent losses to injury of key personnel.

The game was settled by a try midway through the first half. The Upton outside centre managed to wriggle free of attempted tackles, just inside his own half, before he showed an excellent turn of pace to race clear of the Alcester chasers to score under the posts and allow an easy conversion.

Apart from that moment and one or two brief forays in to Alcester territory, the visitors dominated without creating many clear cut chances to score. They thought they had opened their account shortly before half time, however, when a good back line move, culminated in Brett Allard crossing in the corner, only for the match official to call play back as he ruled the final pass to have been forward.

The second half followed a similar tight pattern, although Alcester didn't enjoy quite the level of territorial domination they had in the opening period. They did come closest to scoring again, however, when fly half Matt Gwynn was brilliantly tackled into touch by the home defence in the act of scoring.

Worryingly they also picked up more injuries before the end of the game, although all three of them were knocks more than anything long term and it is hoped that all three players will be fit for next weekend's game.

With Alcester still waiting to hear about the outcome of their appeal in to the recent deduction of league points, they are currently languishing second from bottom in the table on just two points. They will be hoping to improve on that position next week when Coventry side Pinley are the visitors to King's Coughton. Kick off is 2.15pm.