

Saturday October 25th 2008

Midlands Division Six West South (East)

Rugby Welsh 43 Alcester 23

A depleted Alcester side slipped to their first defeat of the season against the well organized league leaders.

Missing four players from the side that won against Harborne in the EDF Junior Vase the previous week, including talismanic skipper Scott Carmichael, Alcester faced an uphill task against their fellow unbeaten opponents.

The home side started well and with the wind at their backs forced three early penalties within kicking range, two of which were converted to give Welsh a 6-0 lead.

On top in the scrum, Alcester began to get in the game and forced a penalty of their own well within fly half Ash Newdick's range, and he struck his chance cleanly into the strong head wind to reduce the deficit for his side.

The home side were still making the most of possession with their man of the match no 8 rescuing ball from his retreating scrum, but somewhat against the run of play, the visitors went in front. Brett Allard, who has spent most of this season operating at hooker but today played at inside centre to cover the player shortage out wide, charged down an attempted Welsh clearance and won the race to gather the ball before rounding off some fine individual work with the game's opening try. Newdick brilliantly converted from the touchline against the wind to give his side a 10-6 lead.

The lead changed hands again before half time when the home side crossed for their first touchdown, a try which was converted for a 13-10 lead, before on the stroke of half time Newdick levelled the scores with another superbly struck penalty.

With the elements in the favour in the second half, Alcester conceded the lead once more, although they had to accept that the second Welsh try was from some brilliant team play, as forwards and backs interchanged and the ball passed through a dozen pair of hands or more on the way to the try line. The home fly half converted the score.

The visitors were dealt a blow when the only experienced head in their youthful back line, Allard, was forced off with a back injury. His replacement, Jim Watson, made an immediate impact rounding off Alcester's best play of the game, following superb work on the left flank by wing Stuart Whitehead and open side Mica Pieri.

The topsy turvy nature of the game continued, as Welsh regained the lead following a poor clearance by the visitors, before Alcester got back within two points as Newdick converted another penalty as the red and blacks forced an infringement deep inside the Welsh twenty two. Unfortunately for Alcester that was the last time they featured in the game as the home side ran in three tries and kicked a further penalty in the final quarter.

Alcester slip to fifth in the league table as the points gained following their recent win at bottom side Coventry Tech have been taken off, following their opponents somewhat frustrating decision to replay the game after it ended with passive scrums. This match will be replayed next month following the fourth round of EDF Vase where Alcester have been drawn at near neighbours Redditch.