

ALCESTER RFC MATCH REPORTS

Saturday 28th November 2009

Midlands Division Four West (South)

Manor Park 15 Alcester 10

Alcester slipped to a third successive league defeat, despite a much improved and battling performance in Nuneaton which saw them lead 10-0 at the break.

Starting with the benefit of the Griff Coton slope in the first half, Alcester had to withstand an early onslaught from the home side, but some sound defence kept their hosts out and slowly Alcester managed to get a grip in the game, thanks mainly to their total domination of the scrum where their much larger and more experienced pack took control and shoved their hosts back at will.

Pressure at the scrum led to the first score for the visitors as the home scrum half strayed offside at the back of his retreating pack, allowing Alcester wing Max Biltcliffe to slot over the first three points. The lighter, more youthful and mobile home side kept their visitors moving around the park and forced a penalty following an Alcester infringement at a ruck, which their kicker sent wide from the attempt at goal. An even remainder of the half ensued with the home side edging the territorial battle, but with Alcester still on top at the set phase, their pack won plenty of ball to allow their backs to probe the home defensive line. On the stroke of half time, Alcester launched their most incisive break to set right wing Ollie Braley free. Braley still had plenty to do when he received the ball inside the home twenty two, but he showed great strength and determination to force himself over in the corner. Biltcliffe brilliantly converted from out wide.

Alcester have been playing at Manor Park for enough seasons to know that the hosts like to kick play in to "Bowling Green Corner", a further slope in the defending left hand corner of the field, at regular opportunities, and the Nuneaton side didn't disappoint as they probed the Alcester defence by keeping the visitors inside their own territory in the opening stages of the half. Their pressure paid off when they crossed for their first try inside the first few minutes of the half. Park kept up the onslaught and their second penalty opportunity of the game narrowed the score to two points, after the successful kick.

The game opened up somewhat in the final quarter and both sides had further chances to increase their score. Park crossed the line again with one of their chances, in the same corner to take the lead, with a good kick leaving the deficit at five points. Alcester's best opportunities came from runs by fly half Andy Smith and lock forward Andy Flynn, but the chances went begging, and the visitors were left to rue those as they contemplated defeat on the journey home.