

Saturday November 8th 2008

Midlands Division Six West South (East)

Coventry Saracens 8 Alcester 29

Alcester returned to winning ways and moved back to third place in the league with a hard fought win in Coventry, despite not being at their best. They faced a spirited Saracens side who belied their league position with a committed performance, in front of their assembled vice presidents. The home side took further determination from the fact they faced one of their old boys, Andy Speirs, playing in the Alcester second row.

The visitors started brightest and nearly went in front inside ten minutes when their pressure in the Saracens half forced a penalty from which scrum half Max Biltcliffe struck the left hand upright. He made no mistake inside five minutes converting his second opportunity to give his side the lead, following another infringement by the home defence.

The visitors increased their lead midway through the half with the score of the game. The pack won off the top line out ball just inside their own half, before scrum half Biltcliffe set his backs free. Right wing Ollie Braley came in off his wing and joined the line in midfield with scything run which took him deep in to Saracens territory. He was halted by the home defence inside the home twenty two, before the ball was moved wide for his fellow wing, Stuart Whitehead to round off an excellent move straight from the Kings Coughton training ground.

The home side scored the only other points of the half through their only kickable penalty opportunity of the game, after the visitors were penalized for killing the ball at a ruck

Saracens upped their game in the second period, and although they enjoyed the better of the opening exchanges, it was Alcester who scored again following a mistake in the home back line, which flanker Mica Pieri capitalized on to race in. Bitcliffe converted.

With the visitors generally on top at the scrum, but the home side having the better of the line out, possession from the packs was fairly even, but it was still Alcester who had more incision outside, when the ball got there. Skipper Scott Carmichael illustrated this by blazing through several attempted tackles to register a trade mark score under the posts, making Biltcliffe's conversion straight forward.

From the restart the home side caught Alcester napping and ran a "funny" move from the kick off. They managed to reclaim the ball deep in Alcester territory and only a solid tackle from Andy Spiers kept them out. From the resulting scrum, the home side shunted their visitors off the ball for the only time in the game, ensuring that their backs took the ball on the front foot which allowed them to power over for a deserved score.

Buoyed by this success, Saracens enjoyed a sustained spell of pressure, but when the visitors held out, they managed to reclaim the ascendancy and take play deep in to home territory. The home side had the ball near their own line and one of their front row forwards tried an elaborate "dink" kick over the top of Alcester's charging defence which was led by Mika

Pieri. Pieri was able charge down the kick and react quickest to gather the loose ball before crossing the line for his second score. Substitute Rich Smith converted.

Alcester were able to close out the win and now face neighbours Wellesbourne in next week's league action. Kick off at King's Coughton is 2.15pm.