

Saturday 11th November 2006 – League

Opposition : Rugby St Andrews

Alcester travelled to meet the league's most unpredictable side, and whilst Rugby St Andrews can occasionally be somewhat of a soft touch, they can also be the division's most potent attacking force, and unfortunately for the red and blacks they met their hosts on one of their good days, whilst Alcester themselves turned in their most lifeless performance of the season.

The King's Coughton men still had the bus journey in their legs when they fell behind to an early converted try, but they rallied and enjoyed what turned out to be their best spell of the game. The visitors line out and resulting driving mauls were two of few bright points in the afternoon, and they used this platform early on to get back in touch of the scoreboard.

Lock Andy Flynn took a clean take at the front of the line out, deep inside the home twenty two, and when his pack drove him on, flanker Keith Beech was at the back of the maul to crash over in the corner.

Alcester did win at least equal possession at the set phases, but their normally strong rucking game fell apart, and they were turned over all too often in the second phase, as well as conceding a string of penalties for not releasing the ball at the tackle. When they did get into home territory the Rugby backs used the wind to good effect to send play back into the Alcester twenty two. The remainder of the half belonged totally to the home side, who racked up twenty unanswered points through two converted tries and two penalties, to leave Alcester with the proverbial mountain to climb in the second half.

On their last visit to St Andrews Alcester did overcome a similar deficit to claim an unlikely win, but any chance of this happening today disappeared in the opening ten minutes of the second half as they conceded another penalty and a converted try which were the final scores of the game. Already missing four key players through injury, they were dealt another blow when influential fly half Matt Gwynn had to leave the field midway through the second period with a hamstring injury. He was replaced by Gary Jilks, in a move which saw skipper Scott Carmichael move to the stand off position.

A very disappointed Alcester side made the journey home knowing that they did not do themselves justice and that they have a lot to work on to get their season back on track after three successive defeats. They made far too many mistakes today, did not use the conditions as well as their opponents and were a poor second best at the ruck situation, which they will work hard to put right before the visit of Upton on Severn to King's Coughton on 25th November. They have a break from action next week as their scheduled opponents are on cup duty. Instead there will be a 1st XV squad training session where they will be working on the lessons learnt from their Rugby disappointment, having now surrendered their third placed position in the league, to fall two places to fifth.

Result : Rugby St Andrews 37 Alcester 5