

Saturday September 16th 2006 – Friendly

Opposition : Bournville (Away)

Alcester go into next week's league opener against Bredon Star, without a win under their belts, after a disappointing defeat in Birmingham, where the hosts scored all of their points in the first half.

Alcester arrived in plenty of time and prepared well, and they gained the early advantage thanks to a well taken try from right wing Andy Jones, who rounded off what proved to be a rare flowing back line move, after no 8 Anthony Yates had gained clean ball with a towering take in the line out.

Despite the visiting forwards dominating first phase possession, particularly at the line out where the Bournville hooker struggled to hit any of his men throughout the whole game, Alcester were often too slow to the ruck situation and had possession turned over far too often. This allowed the home side back into the game, and after their kicker had put points on the board with a successful penalty kick, they took the lead with their first try, after the red and blacks defence was caught napping.

Alcester were dealt a further blow when influential skipper Scott Carmichael had to leave the field with an arm injury, a move that saw outside centre Andy Smith switch to fly half and substitute James Woodhams taking his place.

With Alcester still struggling to make the most of their domination of the set phases, they conceded two more tries, the second right on the stroke of half time.

Alcester changed things around at half time introducing player coach Steve Lee and Director of Rugby Nick O'Connor to the action, and this proved to add more control to Alcester's play, with back row O'Connor's prowess at the ruck situation meaning that the visitors were now much more competitive.

After having much the better of things for a ten minute spell, they doubled their score when James Woodhams rounded off an incisive break. Now it was the home side that were hanging on to their lead, particularly because they were reduced to fourteen men when they lost their loose head prop to the sin bin for an off the ball incident. Unfortunately this served to stifle Alcester more than it benefited them, because without a replacement home prop, the game moved to passive scrummaging, which meant that Alcester's domination of this area of the game was nullified.

There were no further scores in the second period, and whilst Alcester were pleased with winning the second half 5-0, they know they must turn in a full 80 minute performance for next week's crucial league opener. They must also hope that skipper Scott Carmichael can recover from what looks like a badly bruised arm.

Result : Bournville 22 Alcester 10