

Saturday September 9th 2006 – Friendly

Opposition : Dudley Wasps (Away)

Alcester's 1st XV slipped to defeat in their first outing of the season, in a game played in very warm conditions in the Black Country. Alcester arrived late after being held up on their journey, and when they got there they found their hosts wishing to play a 3 x 25 minute match, to allow for the fact that they had 25 players wanting a run out. In the end, the addition of fresh legs proved to be crucial to the final result.

In the opening period, Alcester were left to rue the fact that they had left themselves little preparation time before the game, and they had not got into their stride before they were two converted tries behind. Towards the end of the first 25 minutes the Alcester forwards had begun to establish themselves on the game, giving more ball for their backs to run, but there was little space on a very small pitch, and the strength the side has in their pace out wide was nullified. The home side scored a third try before the first break to lead 21-0.

New captain Scott Carmichael, one of several Alcester players playing their first game since April, issued a rallying call to his troops, and spurred on by that and the introduction of Director of Rugby, Nick O'Connor as a replacement, they gave a much better account of themselves in the second period.

With the front five now firmly on top in the tight, scrum half Dom Skinner had a regular supply of ball to feed his backs with, and typically it was their skipper, Carmichael, playing at fly half, that put his side on the scoreboard. Spotting that the home defence was flat, Carmichael deftly chipped over the advancing Wasps centres, and reacted quickest to the bouncing ball that he then dived on over the line. He converted his own try.

Buoyed by this score, the visitors laid siege to the home line, and they doubled their tally with a first ever try in Alcester colours for giant lock Dave Marriott, who drove his way through several would be tacklers after taking the pop ball from Skinner deep inside the home twenty two. Carmichael again converted.

With the Wasps side making more changes at the second break, the visitors initially struggled to cope with the fresher legs and were forced to defend the opening exchanges, but they did this ferociously and were nearly rewarded with a break away score for right wing Andy Jones, but he just failed to gather the ball from a hack up field, when he had a clear run to the line.

Dudley's kicker kept his 100% record for the afternoon going, with a penalty to move the score board on, and now needing two scores to regain the lead, Alcester were forced to chase the game. They did have chances, but in the end had to settle for a defeat, despite a good last 50 minutes performance.

Alcester have one more week to get their season underway before league action starts on 23rd September when they host Bredon Star. They are on their travels again next week, with a trip to "Cadburys country" to face Bournville.

Result : Dudley Wasps 24 – Alcester 14