

ALCESTER RFC UPDATE 15.9.07

Midlands Division Five West South

Dudley Wasps 19 Alcester 11

Alcester slipped to a narrow defeat in their opening league fixture of the campaign, but the game was as tight as the score line suggests, and the result could have gone either way, as the visitors dominated for long periods of the game particularly in the last quarter of the match.

Still missing several regulars, including skipper Scott Carmichael who fractured a finger in training on Thursday evening, Alcester were forced to blood several former colts in the side, all of whom made a good account of themselves.

The opening exchanges were even, but the home side took the lead with the first penalty opportunity of the afternoon after Alcester infringed at a ruck. Soon after they were level however, through a successful penalty of their own, thanks to the accurate boot of Jack Sears, who doubled his account before the midway point of the half, as Dudley struggled to contain the visitors who had now gained the upper hand.

Both sets of forwards were playing similar games, with the catch and drive option at the line out making progress for both attacks, and both scrummages working hard to pressure their opponents put in. It was the visiting pack however that made the first telling contribution of the afternoon.

Flanker Phil Birks took a good take in the middle of a shortened line out and his pack formed a driving maul that proceeded at pace towards the Wasps line. As their momentum slowed, Fijian flanker Mica Pieri broke from the back of the maul and was driven over the line by his teammates.

Wasps continued to offer their attacking threat from their driven line out, and the visitors were forced to concede penalties to stop the driving mauls. Of the three they conceded before the break, two were converted to leave the half time score at 11-9 in Alcester's favour.

The heat of the September sun was taking its toll on both teams, and the visitors in particular were slow to get back in to their stride after the break. By the time they did they had conceded the lead to Wasps who finally made their driven line out count, as their pack forced their way over from a short range ruck after the maul had been halted just short of the line.

Alcester were struggling to keep any continuity in their game mainly due to the heavy penalty account against them, and the boots of the home back line used every opportunity to move play back into Alcester territory from every penalty. From another line out from one such penalty, Dudley drove over the line to increase their lead.

Now inside the final quarter the red and blacks enjoyed their best spell of the game and most of the play was inside the home twenty-two. They had chances to cross the

line, but a combination of good home defence, and the penalty account against Alcester meant that they were unable to increase their tally. In addition, Wasps conceded six penalties in quick succession within ten yards of the line, and the red and blacks felt that they should have been awarded a penalty try, or at the very least that the referee should have gone to his pocket to issue a yellow card for persistent infringement.

The game ended with no further score, but Alcester were not disheartened as they had given a good account of themselves against a side that swept all before them in their title winning season to gain promotion last year, and are likely to feature strongly again this year. There were a number of positives from the afternoon. Overall it was a much improved performance on last week's debacle at Redditch. In addition Robbie Parker was a constant threat all afternoon to the home side, as he filled in at scrum half for Scott Carmichael's absence.

Alcester's next league game is at home to Coventry Welsh on their President's Day on 29th September. Before then they are in friendly action against Bloxwich at King's Coughton where it is hoped that an early kick off can be arranged so that both sets of players can watch the England vs. Samoa World Cup match from 3pm on the big screen in the clubhouse. All visitors are welcome to join us for this.

Alcester 2nd Team

Alcester's seconds were left disappointed that their first outing of the season was halted by a Spartans side that cried off less than two hours before kick off.

World Cup Dinner – Friday 12th October 2007

Alcester RFC are hosting a World Cup Dinner at the Greig Hall in Alcester on Friday 12th October. Former England and British Lions lock forward and current coach and Sky pundit Nigel Redman is the evening's guest speaker. There will be other entertainment in the form of a stand up comic, after the four course meal. There are tickets still available and the event is open to all. Places can be reserved by calling Alcester club president Mike Edwards on 01789 764096.

Players Wanted

Now that the season is back in full swing, new players of all ages and standards are still required for the three senior sides on Saturdays, and for all age groups on Sundays where the Junior Section runs teams from under 7's upwards. Anyone interested can turn up at the club on Tuesday or Thursday evenings, or either day at the weekend for more information.