

Saturday August 26th 2006 – Pre Season Training Game

Opposition : Redditch (Away)

The local rivals got the new season under way in their now annual training game of four twenty minute quarters, a format that allows for regular changes to the playing personnel. Unfortunately late cry offs meant that an assembled squad of 25 players on Thursday evening, whittled down to only 19 by kick off time for the visitors, which proved crucial in the end, as their opponents were able to field two full teams.

In the first quarter the home side played their strongest squad and ran in two tries in the opening ten minutes, although some woeful tackling by the visitors, who showed their rustiness in this department early on, helped them. Slowly the visitors forced their way back into the game, helped by the domination of their front five at the scrum situation and by the fact that Redditch had lost a player to the pre season sin bin. With the numerical advantage, Alcester had an overlap out wide in their first real flowing move of the quarter, and left wing Rich Smith dived in for his side's opening score, before getting up to brilliantly convert from the touch line.

Redditch changed their side for the second quarter and took time to get into their stride up the slope. Alcester had other chances to score but were restricted to one try, from flanker James Daffern, enjoying an excellent start to the campaign. Fly half Andy Smith converted to give the visitors the lead, 14-12.

Redditch maintained mostly the same fifteen for the third quarter but now it was their turn to play down the considerable slope, and with Alcester's legs tiring, Redditch began to compete more in the third quarter, thanks to a regular supply of ball from the line out, where they enjoyed the upper hand. Soon it was Alcester's turn to be reduced to fourteen men with flanker Keith Beech sent to the sin bin for an incident at a ruck. With Beech off the field Redditch regained the lead with a third try.

The effect of Alcester having fewer players really showed in the final quarter, as Redditch brought their strongest side back on having had forty minutes break, whilst most of their opponents had already had an hour on the field. Despite the King's Coughton men still having the upper hand at the scrum, it was the home side enjoying the better of the game, thanks mainly to their domination of the line out and their speed to the ruck situation. Redditch ran in two more tries before the end of the game, to record a deserved win, although Alcester took heart from a good performance which should bode well, when key men, including new skipper Scott Carmichael return to action.

Result : Redditch 29 – Alcester 14