The Austin Blacks improved to 2-0 with a 50-10 win over Fort Worth Saturday at Burr Field in Austin, Texas. Fort Worth led 10-5 at halftime, and the Blacks exploded for a 45-0 second half.

“We spent probably the first 15-20 minutes of the game defending in our own half, getting all the energy sucked out,” said Austin coach Lachlan Ferguson.

“We were really frustrated with the ruck and the way the ruck was being refereed and the interpretation. Fort Worth were consistently coming in from the side, were offside, were off their feet, just did everything they could to slow the game down. There was no rhythm from our point of view for the first half.”

During his halftime speech, Ferguson put the responsibility of cleaning up the breakdown on his players.

“I put a rocket up the boys at halftime, said it’s got nothing to do with the way the game’s being refereed, it’s got nothing to do with the opposition, it’s down to us,” said Ferguson.

“We’ve just got to decide we’re going to start clearing this ruck and clearing it quicker so we can get more front-foot ball, and we basically just went out there and just turned it on and blew them away in the second half.”

The coach also credited his team’s superior fitness for the explosive second stanza.

“Teams will come out and be huffing and puffing and blowing your house down for the first 30 minutes, but if they haven’t done the work and they haven’t got a base, they’re going to fall away,” said Ferguson.

“And that’s what we’re based on, because we’ve done a lot of work to make sure that we get bigger and stronger and faster in the second half. Games are won in 80 minutes. They’re not won in 40 minutes.”

Flanker Sammy Areias scored two tries on the day, bringing his season total to three, and scrumhalf Ryan Little chipped in two more. Little moved from wing to scrumhalf in last week’s win over HARC when the starting scrumhalf went down with an injury.

“He played so well that we decided to give him another run at nine this week, and he did very well,” Ferguson said.

The Blacks go on the road next week to face The Woodlands, while Fort Worth plays host to the Dallas Harlequins.