



A Nice Xmas Double for Epsom & Ewell FC

Epsom & Ewell FC v Balham FC 20th December – Combined Counties Premier League. Away At Imperial Fields, Bishopsfield Road. Morden.

We played Balham FC at their adopted home, Imperial Fields, and recorded our first double of the season after beating them 3-1 way back in early August at our then temporary home, the Reg Madgwick Stadium in Cobham. This was a far more attritional game, which we emerged from as winners thanks to a second-half strike to secure a 1-0 victory.

We welcomed Che Bell back into our defensive formation and he made a great comeback. Teddy Ralph played at left wing-back in a very unfamiliar position for him and acquitted himself very well. We also welcomed Prince Aderogba to the football club, who impressed on his debut. Antonios Nazareth took a place on the bench after recovering from flu earlier in the week.

One of our players, Connor McShane, was injured in the warm-up, so Ryley Merrett was called up and arrived by taxi to take his place on the substitutes' bench. Last but not least, our 44-year-old assistant manager, Craig Dundas, played up front alongside Tyler Robinson. This demonstrated just how many players we are missing. Craig, by the way, played very well during the 58 minutes he was on the pitch and was a constant threat to the Balham defence.

First Half

The game was mostly played in the Balham half, although they did come back into it during the five minutes before half-time. The referee "set his stall out" early by booking Luis Oliveira in the 8th minute. A further three yellow cards were brandished, making it 2-2 in the book at half-time.

We did have a good shot from Tyler Robinson saved, but this was about the only real goalmouth action of the first half.

Half-time: 0-0

In the 50th minute, Karl Bailey replaced the injured Jason Bloor, and in the 58th minute Obasanjo Akinniranye replaced Craig Dundas. We were still very much on top at this stage.

In the 63rd minute, we got the goal we richly deserved as Tyler Robinson broke down the right flank and crossed for substitute Akinniranye, who calmly slotted the ball between two defenders to give us the lead.

Balham immediately began making substitutions, and we followed suit when Callum O'Keeffe replaced Teddy Ralph in the 74th minute.

Unfortunately, we lost Tyler Robinson in the 87th minute to an alleged elbow on a Balham defender. He was shown a straight red card after the referee consulted with his assistant. Was the red card harsh? Yes, it was. Tyler was convinced after the match that this was the case, and this view was supported by the Balham player involved, who expressed his surprise at the decision.

Could we hold out, with what appeared to be plenty of injury time still to play? The answer was **YES**. A very good three points were secured, moving us on to 28 points, although with no change in our league position.

What's Next?

We have a big match against Corinthian Casuals at Chalky Lane, Chessington, next Saturday, 27th December, with a 3pm kick-off. As a large crowd is expected, it would be advisable to arrive in good time if travelling by car to secure a parking space.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

