

‘Ardley a goal’s difference between them: Epsom and Ewell lose out on penalties

19 October 2026



Saturday 17 October 2026 | Nolan Oils Ground, Ardley | Combined Counties Premier Challenge Cup, First Round | Ardley 2 Epsom & Ewell 2 (Ardley won 6-5 on penalties)

After a heavily delayed journey up the M40 following an incident on the M25, Epsom & Ewell received a warm welcome at Ardley, although the biting chill soon became the overriding feature of the evening.

Despite concerns over squad selection the night before, manager Max assembled a side that produced a highly creditable performance against opponents sitting third in the Northern Division.

Winning the toss, Toby wisely elected to play down the slope, with Epsom adopting a disciplined 4-4-2 formation.

Following a cagey opening five minutes, the Salts broke the deadlock.

Frankie delivered a free-kick that was cleared for a corner, which he took himself. The ball came back to him just inside the penalty area and he struck beautifully with the outside of his right boot through a crowd of players, leaving the goalkeeper rooted to the spot.

It was an excellent first goal for the club.

Ardley equalised in the 24th minute after being awarded a free-kick just outside the box.

Tom Moore curled an impressive left-footed strike over Epsom’s four-man wall and into the top right-hand corner.

The award of the free-kick was strongly questioned by the Epsom bench, with Harry Murphy receiving a yellow card during the protests.

The Salts had opportunities to regain the lead, including a Djazton effort cleared off the line, but it was Ardley who struck again before the interval.

Another free-kick was taken quickly and a sharp one-two opened up the Epsom defence, allowing Declan to finish across Ben Grummitt and give the hosts a 2-1 half-time lead.

The second half was a tighter affair, with clear-cut chances at a premium.

Following an injury to Kionte, the Epsom management reshuffled the side, moving Callum Wilson into central midfield and Djazton back to left-back.

The change paid off in the 79th minute.

Toby’s throw-in was headed by Oba into the path of Frankie, who slipped a precise pass through to the advancing Djazton.

He kept his composure to finish neatly and register his first goal for the club, earning Epsom a deserved equaliser.

The closing stages were frantic.

Ardley struck both the crossbar and a post, but Epsom held firm and the score remained 2-2 at the final whistle, sending the tie to penalties.

After five spot-kicks apiece the sides remained level.

Naz struck the bar before Ardley’s number 16 hit the post. Leo then saw his effort saved by Hillier, only for Grummitt to respond by denying Ardley’s number 12.

Harry converted his penalty and Ardley’s number six replied.

Frankie, one of Epsom’s standout performers on the night, then saw his penalty saved, allowing Ardley’s number 15 to convert the decisive kick and secure a 6-5 shootout victory.

It was an agonising end for the Salts after a spirited and hard-fought performance against strong opposition on the road.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

