

# Epsom and Ewell FC rise to challenge on penalties

28 February 2026



26th February Horley Town FC The New Defence, Horley - Southern Combination Challenge Cup 2nd Round

Epsom & Ewell progress to the next round of the Southern Combination Challenge Cup after a hard-fought 0-0 draw at Horley Town, eventually winning 4-3 on penalties. Was The Salts' third away game in six days, and with players arriving late by train and several changes to the starting XI, it had all the signs of a difficult evening. New goalkeeper Kit Lawrence-Fletcher made his debut between the posts with first starts for Shabir, Allen and Leo Cunningham.

Despite the disruption, Epsom & Ewell started brightly. They struck the crossbar early on, and skipper Brendan Murphy-McVey thought he had opened the scoring with a superb finish—only for the referee to disallow it and book him, ruling he had re-entered the pitch too soon after treatment. Leo Cunningham was a constant threat, repeatedly troubling the Horley defence and veteran centre-back Aaron Bogle. But despite the pressure, the sides went in level at the break.

The Second Half the tempo dipped after half-time, with both teams pushing but unable to find a breakthrough. Chances were limited, and the match drifted towards the inevitability of a penalty shootout.

Horley took the first kick and blazed over, while Epsom converted to take the lead. The shootout unfolded as follows:

Horley miss, Ali Fofahan scores — 0-1

Horley score, Ore Allen misses after the ball moved just at the end of the run up — 1-1

Kit Lawrence-Fletcher saves Horley's third with a strong hand and the ball just looping over the bar.

Craig Dundas's penalty was saved but retaken due to keeper movement; he buries the second attempt — 1-2

Horley score, KJ scores — 2-3

Horley score — 3-3

Stefan Aiwone steps up and converts the decisive kick — 3-4

A composed and committed team performance saw The Salts through. The Salts now host Step 4 side Bedford Sports in the next round as they continue their defence of the trophy.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



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## Sheerwater 2-2 Epsom & Ewell Home game away from home ends honours even.

28 February 2026

17th February - Combined Counties Premier League: Epsom & Ewell were held to a 2-2 draw at the Eastwood Centre against Sheerwater in what was technically a "home game away", with Chalky Lane unplayable.

Before kick-off, thanks were extended to Trevor and Chris for helping to arrange the fixture at short notice, and to Wendy for her efforts behind the bar, on the gate and helping with catering on the night.

On the pitch, it was a competitive contest in which the Salts were forced to grow into the game after several weeks without regular match action. Return of key players There was a welcome boost with the return of Toby, Ali and Luke to the squad after an extended spell out.

Speaking after the match, the managers said: "We've trained for seven weeks, and we look and feel like ourselves again. Just a little bit more fitness and sharpness and it might have been a different result for us. We're buzzing that they're back — they're very important to what we do."

First-half talking points The opening half included two penalty shouts for Epsom, one involving Oba. The manager felt the defender "just got enough of it to make it not a penalty," adding that in a tight league season you do not always get those decisions — and the side cannot rely on them.

Sheerwater also had a controversial moment from a corner, with appeals that the ball had crossed the line. However, there was no goal given. As the manager put it: "They all celebrated like it was in. I don't think it was. Sami didn't seem too concerned. A bit of a phantom non-goal."

The sides went into the latter stages level in a game that was finely balanced. Playing against ten For the fourth successive match, Epsom found themselves facing ten men. On this occasion, the management team felt there was visible progress. "That's the best we've looked against ten. We were cleverer, found the right passes and the right space. We got our two goals and actually looked like scoring." However, he admitted the team may have become "too excited" at 2-1, continuing to push forward when perhaps game management was required. "We were still trying to score when we probably should have set up." Sheerwater eventually levelled, meaning the spoils were shared. Looking ahead With four games scheduled next week — Saturday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday — squad depth will be tested.

The manager remains confident: "We've got a big enough squad to deal with it. The boys prefer playing games to training, so it gives us something to work on." In the end, it was a point away from home against a strong side — and with key players returning, there are positives to build on as a busy period approaches.

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## Epsom and Ewell FC's narrow defeat

28 February 2026



### **Tooting & Mitcham 2 - 1 Epsom and Ewell FC. Saturday 29th November. Imperial Fields, Morden. Combined Counties Premier South League**

The Salts slipped to a narrow 2-1 defeat at high-flying Tooting & Mitcham Utd on Saturday afternoon despite playing most of the football that was played. The referee showed 7 yellow cards to the two sides on the pitch (5 to The Salts), as well as a couple of yellows to the management teams and a red card to one of Tooting & Mitcham's assistants. We did wonder if the game would be played due to torrential rain in the Epsom area, but if it did rain in Tooting, the ground played very well. The number of yellows does provide a suggestion of the type of game played out.

We kept the same starting team from last week's abandoned game v Badshot Lea, with only Ethan Charles-Brazier replacing Ryley Merrett on the bench. The game started well for Epsom & Ewell as we went on the attack from the kick-off and Ali Fofahan was on the receiving end of a bad tackle from T&M No. 6 Jordy Ndozid, who found himself in the book in the 1st minute. Unfortunately, nothing came from the free-kick. Fofahan was causing problems on our right and a great ball in found three players at the back post but Aiwone could only head the ball high and wide from close in. Shortly after, T&M No. 10 Simeone played a ball back to his keeper without really looking, but fortunately for him it was just ahead of Robinson, who was just a little too far out to get to it before the keeper cleared.

On 15 minutes a long ball from T&M found its way into the Salts' box and it was allowed to bounce. Unfortunately, it bounced up and hit Nazareth on the hand and even though it was by his side and not in an unnatural position, the referee pointed to the spot, aided by the shouts of the large crowd of T&M fans behind our goal. T&M No. 9 Shay Brennan made no mistake. Tooting & Mitcham 1-0 Epsom & Ewell.

We were still in the game causing lots of problems on our right. Luis Oliveira went on a mazy run and was clipped just inside the box. Deciding to stay on his feet he chased the ball but was unable to cross it. Should he have gone down? I would say if he had, the referee would have pointed to the spot, but it was still a foul that made him lose control, so really it should have been awarded either way. A few minutes later Oliveira went on another run, the T&M defenders this time not wanting to touch him, but he was unable to get any power in the cross and it went back to McKimm in the goal.

There was very little action for the rest of the half, and just when we thought we would be heading into half-time a goal down, Brennan found his winger Oldham on their right. He quickly moved towards the byline where there didn't seem much danger, but for some reason all three defenders were drawn to the ball and he was able to send a nice ball to the far post where Tariq Mahmoud was unmarked and he slid the ball past Salts keeper Nabbad. We definitely didn't deserve that but on the other side we didn't force the T&M keeper to make a save either.

HT Tooting & Mitcham 2-0 Epsom & Ewell

Two minutes into the second half we nearly gave T&M a third when Nabbad came off his line to clear a long ball but missed it. The T&M forward had to take the ball wide to get it under control. This allowed Aiwone to get back and make a great saving tackle to prevent the ball hitting an empty net. Most of the rest of the game was played with balls over the top or missed passes as both teams tried to take hold of the game. As I said, we were playing the better football but seemed to go for the long pass rather than short, easy balls. Players seemed to want to run with the ball rather than making a quick pass, by which time the recipient was closed down and we invariably had to go back.

Adam Green came off the bench when Tom Collins received a nasty kick on his ankle in the box, and again we believed the ref should have pointed to the spot, but nothing was given. Green, though playing alongside Shane Dunne, started to give The Salts some impetus and control and we looked dangerous. In the 67th minute we got our reward. With some good play on the right, the ball was switched across to Robinson, whose first shot was blocked and the ball fell out to Green, whose shot was also blocked. This time it came back to Robinson who made no mistake. Tooting & Mitcham 2-1 Epsom & Ewell.

On the 72nd minute we made two substitutions with Obasanjo Akinniranye and Karl Bailey replacing Brendan Murphy-McVey and Callum O’Keeffe respectively. Oba was straight into the game, making another good run on our right and getting to the goal line but Herring was unable to put it away, and it seemed he was possibly fouled, but the referee was not giving again and unfortunately a lot of anger from the benches made him come over and book Max Johnson, not for the first time this season.

The referee indicated 9 minutes of injury time, and we tried our best, pinning T&M in their own half. Another run from Oba was defended well and in the last minute a great shot from him just went by the post, ending our last chance of an equaliser.

FT Tooting & Mitcham 2-1 Epsom & Ewell.

The T&M assistant who had been sent off returned to the pitch to “tease” our own management team and this set off another melee in the centre circle as the teams were trying to leave the pitch. Our coach remonstrated with the referee about him getting back on the pitch, which only earned him a very unfair yellow. It’s always difficult for the referee when players start play-acting or calling for every tackle to be a yellow or possibly red, but the game certainly lacked any discipline, so it will be interesting to read his report. We stayed in 13th place as the teams around us lost and Tooting move up to 2nd place.

There is a quick turnaround for our next game away at Abbey Rangers on Tuesday evening, KO 7.45pm, and on Saturday we are away to bottom side Guildford City with a 3pm KO. We look forward to seeing you there.

Epsom & Ewell:

Sami Nabbad, Luis Oliveira, Ethan Nelson-Roberts ©, Shane Dunne, Antonios Nazareth, Stefan Aiwone, Callum O’Keeffe, Tom Collins, Tyler Robinson, Brendan Murphy-McVey, Ali Fofahan.

Subs: Green (54), Bailey (71), Herring (71), Akinniranye (71), Brazier (78).

Report and image: Epsom and Ewell FC Media



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## Late flash of composure seals Epsom & Ewell’s away win

28 February 2026



Sheerwater 3 - 4 Epsom and Ewell FC. Sunday 16th November - Combined Counties Premier League.

Epsom & Ewell finally claimed their first league away win of the season with a breathless 4-3 victory at Sheerwater, a contest that careened from controlled dominance to near-implosion and back again in a frantic final act.

Managerial tweaks paid early dividends as goalkeeper Sami Nabbad returned between the sticks, new signing Tyler Robinson led the line, and midfielders Shane Dunne & Brendan Murphy-McVey rejoined a refreshed starting XI. The Salts looked sharper, hungrier, and far more incisive than their recent travels had suggested.

They needed just six minutes to announce themselves. Robinson slipped a clever ball into Jason Bloor, whose effort was parried by Sheerwater keeper Antonios Nazareth. Tom Collins, alive to the rebound, arrived to head home from close range. It was a dream start for a side still searching for their first points on the road.

Brendan Murphy-McVey’s early pressure forced chances, and Robinson’s industry kept Sheerwater penned in, though the striker was shown a yellow card on 26 minutes for a late challenge on the keeper. Collins and Ali Fofahan both went close as Epsom continued to dictate, but Sheerwater finally stirred on 34 minutes when Rahman Ajibola broke free only to drag his shot wide.

Epsom doubled their lead on 40 minutes through a moment laced with both craft and confusion. Robinson earned a corner on the left edge of the penalty area, and Collins swung the set-piece directly towards the top corner. Nazareth rose to meet it along with defender Stefan Aiwone, but the ball appeared to curl straight in, possibly helped on its way by the goalkeeper. However it crossed the line, Epsom's lead was thoroughly deserved.

A late scrambled scare in their own box and a booking for Connor McShane closed out the half, prompting the introduction of Ethan Brazier after the interval to guard against a second yellow.

But the restart brought chaos.

On 50 minutes, Nazareth conceded a needless free-kick on the left, and Sheerwater seized their lifeline. The delivery was artfully clipped into the centre, where Elliott York steered home a deft header past Nabbad to make it 2-1.

Three minutes later, Nazareth ventured out on one of his trademark mazy runs, lost possession, and from the resulting attack Harvey Valter levelled the match. A two-goal cushion was gone in a blink.

Tensions spiked on 56 minutes when Collins was pulled back unnoticed by the referee, prompting a tangle with Aiden Larkin. Both saw yellow once tempers cooled and the handbags had been packed away.

Further substitutions followed as Epsom sought to restore control.

The moment came on 65 minutes. Fofahan teed up Murphy-McVey 25 yards out, and the midfielder unleashed a looping strike that sailed over the Sheerwater keeper and into the net to restore Epsom's advantage.

There were more changes on 78 minutes and a nervous moment on 83 when Callum O'Keefe was booked for a foul that may well have been triggered by Jason Vincent's involvement—a potential second yellow avoided.

But Sheerwater refused to yield. On 85 minutes, with Epsom's centre-halves caught in two minds by the charging Nabbad who was beaten by a deft lob from George Mackie from the through ball. At 3-3, The Salts' season-long away frustrations threatened to resurface.

Yet there was one final twist.

Two minutes later, Andrew Herring threaded a ball forward that pinballed off bodies and broke fortuitously to O'Keefe, alone on the penalty spot and just kept onside by a retreating defender. With Sheerwater appealing for a flag that never came, he rounded the keeper and slotted into the empty net. Calmness personified, and a decisive blow.

After a frenetic, pulsating contest, Epsom & Ewell emerged with a hard-fought and fully deserved first away win of the campaign—one built on early dominance, character in adversity, and a late flash of composure when it mattered most.

### **FT: Sheerwater 3 - 4 Epsom & Ewell**

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## **Epsom and Ewell FC just lose out 2 points again**

28 February 2026



Epsom and Ewell FC v Eversley and California - Tuesday 11th November. Premier Division South.

For the 5th time in recent weeks, we failed to close out a game we should have won easily. The game finished 1-1 and we "dropped" another 2 points. Whilst you can never tell the final results of every game, we calculate we have lost 7 points since the beginning of October, having been in the lead for the majority of the game.

More changes to the team were required due to further suspensions and injuries. The former we need to get a grip of, as the constant chopping and changing makes life difficult to get a settled side that might grow in confidence and hold out in difficult situations, although there was nothing really difficult on Tuesday.

Ben Grummitt retained his place in goal as Faebian is still injured, Connor McShane came in for the suspended Luis Oliveira and Ethan Nelson-Roberts replaced the injured Harry Murphy (Saturday's man of the match). In midfield, Ryley Merritt came in for Brendan Murphy-McVey and Jason Vincent returned in place of Obasanjo Akinniranye. It was good to see Ethan Brazier on the bench again after a long injury battle.

The conditions, with the swirling wind and rain, made play difficult, and this was reflected in our lowest crowd of the season at 68. We started well with the conditions, and Jason Bloor won a free kick early on, going through a couple of tackles and eventually being brought down, but the free kick from McShane went over the bar. On 10 minutes, Niall Stillwell fell awkwardly after going in for a challenge, and after a lengthy stop on the field, he had to be assisted off the pitch with a dislocated shoulder. He was in great pain going back to the dressing room, where an ambulance was called. We fear he will be out for months rather than weeks. Brendan Murphy-McVey had an early start off the bench.

We had all the early play. Ali Fofahan had a half-chance but put the ball over the bar, and Bloor got to the byline with a great cross. Jason Vincent, coming in on the far post, got his foot to it, but Josh Selby in the Eversley goal got across and somehow managed to keep it out. We continued to dominate and won a few corners that McShane put into great positions, but no one could get their head to it. Kionte also had a long-range effort when he really should have put the ball to Nelson-Roberts, who was in yards of space on our left. On 42 minutes, we finally got our reward when another attack had Ali Fofahan in the box, and he was brought down from behind, leaving the referee with no option but to point to the spot. Ali took the penalty himself, driving the ball into the bottom right-hand corner. The keeper guessed right but the shot was too powerful. We had one more corner before the end of the half, but we went in at half-time 1-0 up.

### **HT Epsom & Ewell 1-0 Eversley and California**

We were good value for our lead but really should have been 2 or 3 up, as the visitors had no real attacks or deserved anything.

The second half started with Eversley enjoying the best of the conditions, with the rain coming down harder, but we were still in control of the game. On 52 minutes, we gained another free kick from Bloor being brought down near the box, but again the free kick evaded everyone, and Selby made an easy catch. Ryley Merritt was then played in, and he controlled the ball into the box, but his shot was saved by the keeper's feet. Another good chance was missed, and another corner was wasted after. Obasanjo replaced Kionte and Tom Collins replaced Bloor on 73 minutes. The changes worked in that we continued to create chances but still couldn't find the important second goal.

Eversley & California seemed to grow in confidence as they knew one chance might be all they needed. On their first real attack in the second half, Eversley found their way into the box, and a good shot was blocked for a corner by Aiwone. The first one went across goal and was cleared for another corner, but this time Ross Baker found the far side of the net direct from the corner.

We then tried everything to get the winner. Ethan Brazier returned to replace McShane, and Teddy Ralph came on for Ryley Merritt. We pushed hard but couldn't find the composure to put the ball away. We had at least six good chances in the last 10 or so minutes, but each one went wide or high. There was a small opportunity provided when Nathan Mindomba appeared to hit out at Brendan after a collision that found both players on the floor and wrestling to get up. The referee showed the red card after talking to the linesman. It was too late to take any real advantage as there were only six minutes left, but it has continued our run of failing to beat sides when we have a man advantage.

We continued to push but couldn't find that one chance, and the game finished, much to the travelling fans' delight, at 1-1, having seen their team concede 10 goals in the last two games.

### **FT - Epsom & Ewell 1-1 Eversley and California**

That is now eight games without a win and really not playing well. We again are just unable to close out a game. Horley, Tooting & Mitcham and Abbey are good sides, so you may expect one of them to get a late goal, but Eversley are probably the weakest side we have seen down here, yet they are going home with a point. We sit in 17th place, only five points off the relegation places. We have also lost our advantage of games played, and in fact two teams below us now have games in hand, and the next five clubs above have all played fewer than us.

We face a tough game on Saturday away at The Eastwood, home of Sheerwater, chasing our first away win of the season. KO 3pm. Sheerwater are having a much better season than last and sit in 7th place, having taken 10 points from the last six games, in contrast to our four. Whilst we badly need a win, a repeat of our draw last season would be a welcome point considering recent form.

We return to Chalky Lane the following Saturday v Badshot Lea, who we really should have beaten away earlier in the season where we missed a penalty early on. Kick-off 3pm. We look forward to seeing you.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



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## **Epsom and Ewell bow out of FA Vase**

28 February 2026



Eastbourne v Epsom and Ewell FC Saturday 8th November. The Salts succumbed to a wonder strike from Eastbourne midfielder Brett Paton early in the second half to bow out of the FA Vase, 1-0 at The Oval ground in Eastbourne in front of a crowd of around 200. Almost to rub "salts" into the wound, Paton said after the game he had not scored for 3 years, which probably shows where the shot would normally end up.

Ben Grummitt started in goal for only his second start of the season, Obasanjo Akinniranye replaced Jason Vincent, who was cup-tied, up front and Ali Fofahan came in for Emmanuel Limpo, who went to the bench. We came into the game in a run of 7 games without a win, so we really needed a good performance to progress to the 3rd round. United have a good recent record at home, although they are only mid-table in their division. Eastbourne had the best of the early exchanges except in the 4th minute where Jason Bloor put Oba through on goal. He ran onto the pass with two defenders bearing down on him. Unfortunately, his shot lacked power and the keeper was able to get down to his right to make a good save.

Apart from that there was little for the keepers to do. There were a lot of fouls and certainly the United players like to yell during each tackle. Murphy-McVey was booked on 13 minutes for pulling back an Eastbourne midfielder and then a few minutes later was subject to a poor challenge which seemed to deserve a yellow card at least, but the ref decided to keep his cards in his pocket, to the angst of Salts co-manager Max Johnson. The referee decided to have a quick chat with Max in order to calm him down. In between, on 15 minutes, Eastbourne had their first real chance with a good move down the left, the ball was quickly moved across the goal before Rhyle Ovenden, Eastbourne's captain, tried to curl a shot into the top right corner but he put a little too much height on it and it sailed harmlessly over.

Eastbourne's No.7 was causing trouble down our left but Harry Murphy was generally coping and in most cases blocking any cross before any real danger. Jason Bloor and Luis Oliveira were also running the home defence and it led to a couple of free kicks in dangerous areas but we failed to take advantage. There was a bit of trouble where we allowed a long ball up front to bounce. Aiwone let it bounce over his head and tried to clear it. As he hit it the Eastbourne No.9 attempted to head it and it was unclear from our position if he connected with Aiwone's boot or the ball. He fell to the ground clutching his head and it started the "normal kerfuffle" with United players screaming for a penalty and maybe a card, but the referee stayed firm and didn't even give a free kick, just a drop ball back to Grummitt.

After another series of moves around the Eastbourne box Luis was again brought down and this time the referee did bring out the yellow card. McVey hit the wall with the initial shot but Fofahan caught the rebound on the half-volley and a powerful shot was deflected wide. Fofahan then curled the corner onto the bar but it was cleared by the defence. Eastbourne then went down our end and had a couple of corners. Naz then made a clearance off our own line on the 44th minute.

### **We went into half time all square: Eastbourne United 0-0 Epsom & Ewell FC**

Overall, the game was pretty equal with both sides moving the ball well but failing to trouble either keeper really. Eastbourne had the first attack in the second half and the ball fell to Brett Paton who was on the Eastbourne left just outside the box. He looked up and quickly hit a great shot that flew into the top left-hand corner, giving Grummitt no chance in goal. Eastbourne United 1-0 Epsom & Ewell FC.

The Salts didn't really deserve to go behind but it did take a "worldie" to put Eastbourne in front. We started to move the ball around but got caught a couple of times too. On 52 minutes Luis lost the ball on the halfway line and, being the last man on that side, enabled the Eastbourne attack to get to the byline where a good cross was put in but Grummitt managed to just get his hand on the ball and tip it away from a couple of players coming in at the back. On 58 minutes we made a couple of changes with Conor McShane replacing Brendan and Ryley Merritt replacing Niall as we went in search of the equaliser. On 64 minutes we were given a little lift when Tyano Wilson, who had been causing problems on their right, had started a run through the centre of the pitch but the ball just started to get away from him. McShane took the ball but Wilson lunged in two-footed in an attempt to keep the ball but only made contact with Conor and the referee had little hesitation in showing a red card. Now, following our recent form facing 10 men, it could be said it was a blessing in disguise but we are pleased to say we did really start to cause problems. We forced a few corners and McShane put in some lovely balls. The keeper just managed to get one hand to push the ball away and the second corner found Oba whose shot was deflected across the goal where Naz came in on the far side but his header crashed off the post for the second time.

On 78 minutes Oba found himself in the box and, twisting and turning, found a little space as he went to shoot. He was tackled and he went down. We appealed for a penalty of course and unfortunately, amidst cries of "diving" from the opposition, the referee decided the contact was not enough for a penalty and waved our appeals away. After a couple more half chances we made another couple of subs: Emmanuel Limpo came on for Kionte and Callum O'Keefe for Jason Bloor. On 88 minutes Ethan Nelson-Roberts came on for Antonios Nazareth. The referee showed 6 minutes of injury time which gave us a little hope of just getting an equaliser. On 90+2 Eastbourne nearly put the game out of reach when a slip allowed their forward in and having sent Grummitt in goal one way, he placed the ball towards the other corner only to see it slip by the post. We managed another couple of half chances but failed to trouble the keeper. Eastbourne then moved the ball down their right and succeeded in keeping the ball in the corner wasting valuable minutes. We managed one last foray into the Eastbourne half and won a corner. With Grummitt also getting into the box, it was our final chance but the corner didn't get past the first defender and was cleared which gave the referee the chance to blow his whistle.

So we bowed out of a cup again to Eastbourne United - Eastbourne United 1-0 Epsom & Ewell FC. After the game our joint managers spoke about their delight in the overall performance and had actually forgotten about the fine goal that separated the sides. Also United officials were kind in their assessment of the game, agreeing it was a good cup tie and very little separated the two sides. Again we feel it is the lack of a striker that cost us. Oba and Ali battled well up front but were beaten by a towering defence. When we played the ball on the ground we did cause trouble.

The end was marred by a few home supporters who decided to have a few unnecessary words with our players as they left the field. It is a shame as you expect people to be gracious in victory as well as defeat. The situation was quickly nipped in the bud by the Eastbourne security and officials. They apologised in the bar after and confirmed that the "supporters" concerned would be dealt with.

It is a quick turnaround again for our next home game on Tuesday night v Eversley and California at Chalky Lane, KO 7.45. This is probably an early "must win" game to put a bit of space between us and the bottom few clubs.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

