

# Good start to season with Salts

25 August 2022

Pos	Team	GD	PTS
1	Wick	7	12
2	Epsom & Ewell	4	9
3	Godalming Town	5	7
4	Shoreham	5	7

Mavericks receive a repeat dose of the Salts. **Worthing United 0-3 Epsom & Ewell** - Southern Combination League - Division One - Saturday 20th August 2022. Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk) Reporter: Richard Lambert.

In October 2021 we made our first visit to the Robert Albon Memorial Ground; the home of Worthing United, and won 3-0. Ten months on we repeated the scoreline without too much alarm and moved up to second place in the table as a result.

Our Management declared themselves happy enough with the result, but not quite so happy with the performance, and it's true to a point, as the match was a little scrappy at times. However, the warm conditions, bone dry surface and strong winds all played their part in that, as indeed did an extremely eccentric second half performance from the officials.



I have referred previously to the size of our squad, although the starting eleven is now starting to look more regular and for the second match in a row we made just one change with Athan Smith-Joseph moving to the bench as Jaevon Dyer made his first start for the club out on the left wing.

We kicked off with the wind at our backs and made a positive start. An early Ryan "Butch" Smith corner was headed back across goal by Brad Peters for Andy "Woody" Hall to hook the ball inches over the bar in just the seventh minute before a long throw from Jubril "Jibs" Adamson bounced through the six yard box and Richard Pingling saw his close range shot blocked by a defender. Peters was then at full stretch but was unable to direct his header from a Steve Springett free kick on target. All of this occurred in just the first fifteen minutes!

Pingling sent a thirty yarder just over the bar and in the 17th minute he was the creator of our opening goal, doing well on the right to beat two men before crossing with his right foot to the near post where Adam Grant was able to head the ball just inside the near post from six yards.

Springett had a fine game on Wednesday against Forest Row, but his afternoon would end painfully and prematurely after falling awkwardly and dislocating his thumb in the 26th minute. Play stopped for six minutes and the thumb was popped back into position, but our defender had to visit the local hospital for a scan. Hopefully it will reveal no further damage. Louis Chin came on in his place with Captain Gideon Acheampong moving over to left back in our defensive four.

We had a scare just before half time after Hall bundled his opponent over just outside the box and the free kick appeared to go through our wall, but Matt Walton was there to make the save and this was the most worrying moment for our boys from a defensive point of view as Walton would go on to claim his first clean sheet for our club. In fact as the half closed Hall nearly made his mark at the other end with a diving header from a Smith corner that Mac Scott in the Mavericks goal did well to claw away. However, there were still six minutes of injury time to play and Adamson forced another save out of Scott, but in the fourth minute of injury time we scored a second after Pingling sent a high ball in on the right hand side of the penalty area. Adamson got himself in front of the defender to shield the ball, held him off and then hooked it across goal, where Dyer was able to stretch and knock the ball in from close range.

We came out confidently with our two goal lead and looked for more. Dyer made a good run on the left but was denied for a corner by a great final second block from Andrew Younger, although the defender tweaked his ankle in making the challenge and was required to leave the field after treatment. We made that one man advantage count from the Smith delivery in the 55th minute as Peters launched himself at the ball, knocking it forward, and whilst he was blocked from following it up, Dyer was there to knock the ball past Scott from close range. However, that description doesn't really tell the full story. I do not know whether our man has ever practised Taekwondo, but as the ball was heading towards goal it was behind him, and somehow he got his leg up to head height and knocked the ball in with the back of his heel for a skilful and acrobatic finish!

We made a couple more substitutions soon after this goal when Tiago Andrade and Josh Owen joined the action in the 63rd minute. However, the final twenty minutes of the match were all about the officials. I have no idea why but the referee suddenly started to issue cards, starting with Dean Sherwood the Worthing United Captain who was sent to the sin bin. While we had the one man advantage Andrade played a perfect pass into the stride of Pingling and as he drew his foot back to shoot, he was clattered into from behind by Younger, yet somehow neither the referee nor the Assistant saw the foul. It has to be one of the most clear non-awarded penalties I have seen in recent years and insult was added to injury when Andrade was involved with some good interplay with another substitute George Membrillera, but as Andrade drilled the ball below Scott the flag was raised for offside. It is possible that one or other of them may have been, but after

the previous “non-call” a few minutes before, it was impossible to have confidence in the decision and certainly our players didn’t seem to agree with it!

Things got stranger. Pingling was taken out by Younger in the 76th minute and as the yellow card was raised, you wondered whether it really should have been a second one after Younger had also committed the “foul” for the non-penalty. However, even though the offender had been booked, Pingling was still made to leave the field after treatment. This was confusing and a few minutes later after Pingling had been substituted, the Assistant then overheard comments from the dug out and brought the matter to the referee’s attention who then sent our man off. People who were over there have confirmed that it was just conversation between people on the bench, but for some reason the officials chose to get involved.

There was still time for a home player to receive a yellow card for diving before Membrillera picked up a strange yellow card after he rolled the ball into the net after being flagged offside. This could easily have been dealt with by a quick word, but the referee then also booked Adamson in injury time for what looked like just incidental contact, following a Smith-Joseph run during which the ball had gone out of play, but which you’ll probably be unsurprised to hear was also missed by the officials!

The ending of the match left a bit of a sour taste as it stopped both teams from playing football and the scoreline remained unchanged at 3-0 as the final whistle blew. Still, it was another three points and our third win in a row places us in a healthy position with our next League encounter at Oakwood coming up on the August Bank Holiday morning. Before that we visit Step Five Redhill in the F.A. Vase on Saturday; a good team who will certainly give our boys a test.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Gideon Acheampong ©, Steve Springett, Ryan ‘Butch’ Smith, Brad Peters, Andy “Woody” Hall, Jaevon Dyer, Zach Powell, Jubril “Jibs” Adamson, Adam Grant, Richard Pingling

Subs: Louis Chin for Springett (32), Tiago Andrade for Grant (63), Josh Owen for Smith (63), George Membrillera for Dyer (71), Athan Smith-Joseph for Pingling (81)

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Wick	4	4	0	0	10	3	7	12
2	Epsom & Ewell	4	3	0	1	10	6	4	9
3	Godalming Town	3	2	1	0	8	3	5	7
4	Shoreham	3	2	1	0	7	2	5	7
5	East Preston	3	2	1	0	3	1	2	7
6	Billingshurst	4	2	1	1	8	7	1	7
7	Chessington & Hook United	3	2	0	1	7	3	4	6
8	Selsey	3	2	0	1	6	4	2	6
9	Arundel	3	1	1	1	6	5	1	4
10	Dorking Wanderers 'B'	3	1	0	2	6	5	1	3
11	Forest Row	3	1	0	2	8	9	-1	3
12	Mile Oak	3	1	0	2	4	8	-4	3
13	Oakwood	3	0	1	2	3	6	-3	1
14	Seaford Town	3	0	1	2	4	8	-4	1
15	Hallsham Town	3	0	1	2	0	5	-5	1
16	Montpellier Villa	3	0	0	3	1	7	-6	0
17	Worthing United	3	0	0	3	0	9	-9	0

## Thrashing good win for the Salts

25 August 2022



Epsom & Ewell 5-2 Forest Row Southern Combination League - Division One. Wednesday 17th August 2022. Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk). Reporter: Richard Lambert.

On Wednesday night at Fetcham Grove we thoroughly deserved the three points on offer with a 5-2 League win, although required two superb headers from Brad Peters to seal the points as the visitors threatened to take something from the match with the score at 3-2 midway through the second half.

Peters had been substituted on Saturday at Seaford Town, having been yellow carded and sin-binned in quick succession and it was notable that for this match Gideon Acheampong was wearing the Captain’s armband instead, but our centre-

half responded well with a superb performance defensively and the two goals provided the cherry on the cake! It was just a pity that his goals were only seen by a crowd (counted twice independently) of 66 people on a Wednesday night when there were few other matches taking place.

We made just the one change to our starting eleven with Adam Grant coming in for the unavailable Tiago Andrade and retained the back four which had worked well at Seaford three days previously. Peters nearly opened the scoring in the second minute when he guided a header from a Ryan Smith free kick just wide of the post twelve yards out, before Grant saw his shot on goal blocked a couple of minutes later. However, we opened our home account for the season in the eleventh minute when Grant made a fine run down the left and his pull back skimmed off the boot of Athan Smith-Joseph out to Richard Pingling just inside the penalty area, where his low strike found the bottom corner and gave Ben Abbott in the visiting goal no chance.

Smith-Joseph was giving the opposition defenders trouble as usual and he broke through on the left; cutting in and striking across goal, but Abbott was able to claw the ball away from the danger area. He then beat some more defenders before rifling a shot just over the bar, aided by the slightest touch from Abbott, although the goal kick was still awarded. We then had a pair of yellow cards, one for each side and both correctly awarded, with Jubril Adamson receiving his for a late lunge which caught an opponent.

The visitors drew level in the 42nd minute when a nice move from the left was finished off by a cannonball strike from the 18 yard line from Brett Caiger, whistling past Matt Walton into the roof of the net. However, their jubilation was short lived as a Steve Springett cross from the left was not dealt with and Adamson tucked away the loose ball into the corner in the 44th minute, so the half ended with our boys ahead once again.

Although Forest Row had been dangerous on occasions, we deserved our half time lead and extended it in the 47th minute when a great through ball from Zach Powell was perfectly weighted into the stride of Springett and he drilled the ball across Abbott into the bottom corner to make it 3-1.

We were on top now and Springett and Pingling forced good saves from Abbott, but then the Row pulled a goal back somewhat against the run of play in the 62nd minute when Steve Major eluded his marker to glance a near post corner across Walton into the far corner.

The game was a little too open for a while after that, but we settled down and Grant was denied from close range by Abbott and then substitute Jaevon Dyer, making his debut, made a great run through a crowd but sliced his shot wide. It would have been one of the best debut goals I'd seen, but we didn't have to wait long to make the game safe. Peters earned a corner with a dangerous ball across goal that was turned away at the far post, and from the delivery our defender remained up for the set piece and thumped the header past Abbott from close range in the 78th minute. Four minutes later he did it again from a Springett free kick, this time maybe six yards out, but still unstoppable.

As the match wound down we also had a couple more debuts as Eldi Baze and George Membrillera joined the fray late on. The latter had in fact been on the scoresheet in our last home match, although it was for the opposition when Dorking Wanderers Reserves won here back in April, but this time we were already home and dry and a late card for Grant for an unnecessary nudge in the back made no difference.

The final whistle blew soon after and we moved up to fifth place in the table as a result; only behind Billingshurst on alphabetical order. The Row had won their previous match, defeating Seaford Town 4-1, but this win tells me all I already knew from pre-season, which is that we will be challengers this term. One thing to note is that in three matches so far we have used all fifteen available substitutes and we clearly continue to have much strength in depth. We visit Worthing United on Saturday, hoping to keep our winning run going.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Gideon Acheampong ©, Steve Springett, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Brad Peters, Andy "Woody" Hall, Athan Smith-Joseph, Zach Powell, Jubril "Jibs" Adamson, Adam Grant, Richard Pingling

Subs: Jaevon Dyer for Adamson (52), Eldi Baze for Pingling (71), Joshua Owen for Smith (75), Louis Chin for Powell (79), George Membrillera for Smith-Joseph (82)

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## Two excellent strikes earn the points for Salts

25 August 2022



Seaford Town 1-2 Epsom & Ewell FC Southern Combination League - Division One Saturday 13th August 2022 Report  
Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk) Reporter: Richard Lambert.

With one swish of the left foot and a low scissor volley with the right, Jubril "Jibs" Adamson and Joao "Tiago" Andrade registered their first goals for the club and provided the Salts with a healthy seaside tonic as they put last week's loss at Shoreham firmly in the rear view mirror with a 2-1 win at Seaford Town on Saturday.

It was Adamson's debut, although he was not even in the original starting sixteen when it was announced, replacing Jahobi Maher in a pre-match line up change, who I presume was injured in the warm up, but it proved to be a successful change as his strike enabled our boys to recover from a shaky start and ultimately take the three points.

This was not an easy match to watch on a day where it was too hot for supporters, let alone players! The searing heat was constant, although in a strange way the players were helped a little by the stop-start nature of the game as a result of an over fussy and at times uncertain refereeing display which confused players and viewers alike. However, there were a number of positives to be taken from this match in addition to the obvious win. Both teams maintained a really high tempo



throughout and the contest was a totally competitive one throughout, while we also showed good game management, both on and off the pitch to ensure that we remained ahead against an opponent who will be there or thereabouts at the end of the season.

We had a strange and unexplained delay to the start of the game and the players were kept waiting before we finally got underway seven minutes late and the first thing my boy noted was that we had started with a back four, after playing all pre-season with a back three. On the Seaford surface which was understandably brown, but with occasional patches of green speckled across it, we looked like we would be off to a good start from the opening exchanges, only to fall behind from a right wing ball in that was met at the near post with a strike from Callum Connor that was blocked, but he was first to reach the loose ball and smashed it past Matt Walton from close range in the sixth minute.

It would have been easy to think back to the previous week when we conceded after nine minutes and never recovered, but if anyone was thinking like that, it wasn't for long after a delightful through ball just two minutes later found Adamson and his early strike was low and just inside the post from twenty yards before Seaford keeper Mike Platt, with a career as a Ben Stokes lookalike ahead of him, was able to do anything about it. In fact he couldn't have reached it if he had been holding a bat!

It got better in a hurry too as Athan Smith-Joseph made tracks down the right wing in the 15th minute and sent a cross over. Platt came out of his goal and called for it, but the ball was already landing on the defender's head and he cleared it away. However, the clearance fell straight to Andrade just inside the penalty area and he showed good technique to keep his volley down, which flew into the net that Platt had vacated.

Both sides had another good chance before the break. The hosts had a 37th minute free kick that was met with a decent header, although Walton appeared to get a hand to the ball before it hit the post and flew away, and then on the counter attack Smith-Joseph got down the right again and his pull back was sent just over the bar from Andrade from twelve yards. One more chance followed when a Ryan Smith free kick out on the right was met by the incoming Brad Peters, but he couldn't quite get a sufficient contact and glanced the ball wide with his head.

The half had seen plenty of stoppages and the referee was the reason for most of them. Delays were frequent because of odd decision making and his habit of wandering over to his Assistants, almost as if he was after some sort of validation. This was proving a little frustrating and just before the half time break Peters found himself sent to the sin bin. Although I don't know what was said, you had sympathy for our Captain at this point and he missed the final seconds followed by the opening ten minutes of the second half. Despite being down to ten men in those closing seconds there was still time for Steve Springett to show good energy and make advances down the left, although his ball in was volleyed over by Andrade.

The second half commenced with another unusual decision as Gideon Acheampong just reached the ball after it had already gone out, but sent it out of the ground and picked up the first yellow card of the day in the 50th minute, although we were down to ten at the time so that may have factored into the referee's thinking. However, I've seen far worse completely ignored before! Peters returned after ten minutes actual play had occurred, but he then picked up a silly yellow card for a push right on the edge of the area and when moments later Connor picked up a yellow for the home side after a foul on Andrade, our Captain was taking a risk by clapping very clearly in the referee's direction. Well aware that a second sin bin offence would leave us with ten men, our Assistant Manager Matt Chapman and his team, in the absence of both joint Managers today, made the wise decision to replace Peters with Johnny "Sonic" Akoto who made his debut at left back with Springett moving into the centre.

The hosts tried to push us back. Literally in one case when a long throw came in and Springett was sent flying, but the referee missed this foul that I could see from 100 yards away and the ball needed to be cleared out from under our crossbar by Andy "Woody" Hall. We then saw our left winger Richard Pingling kick the ball away into a hoarding, but fortunately for us, although inconsistently he didn't receive a card. Pingling and Smith-Joseph asked questions of the Seaford defence all day and were a regular threat.

As the match progressed, further substitutions followed and one of these, Adam Grant just saw his header sent over the bar from another Smith-Joseph delivery and there was time for a new player Joshua Owens to come on for his debut where he, along with Owen Higgins and Louis Chin bolstered our tiring midfield. Chin came on in the 91st minute, yet we played nine minutes over, and whilst there were a couple of minutes taken for the mid-half drinks break, it was a very long time before the whistle blew and we could celebrate the points.

On another day, the home team could have taken a point, but our players looked much more solid this weekend and rarely looked in trouble during the second half. We kept a very good side at arm's length for much of the contest and for that reason I believe we were worthy of the three points, something also acknowledged by the Seaford Manager Paul Wise in his always honest post-match comments. We now host Forest Row next, but please note that this match has been moved from the Tuesday to the Wednesday at short notice. Such are the hazards of ground sharing, although I imagine that our players will be grateful for the extra day's respite between games!

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Gideon Acheampong, Steve Springett, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Andy "Woody" Hall, Brad Peters ©, Athan Smith-Joseph, Zach Powell, Jubril "Jibs" Adamson, Tiago Andrade, Richard Pingling

Subs: Johnny "Sonic" Akoto for Peters (64), Adam Grant for Adamson (75), Owen Higgins for Smith-Joseph (84), Joshua Owens for Andrade (86), Louis Chin for Powell (91)

# Shoreham 3-0 Epsom & Ewell

25 August 2022



Southern Combination League - Division One. Saturday 6th August 2022. Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk) Reporter: Richard Lambert.

On Saturday we suffered our third straight 3-0 defeat when visiting Middle Road, home of Shoreham. Whilst the previous two losses contained many positives against opponents of a far higher standard, this latest performance came in the extremely important first League match of the season and was significantly poorer than any of our pre-season encounters. In fact this was our worst opening day result since losing 6-0 against Windsor & Eton in 1970!

Shoreham are a good team at this level and defeated us here in the League last season, so this was already expected to be one of our toughest challenges of the season at a time when our new Management team are just beginning to put a team together. However, if there has been an issue of concern this season it has been the sheer number of players we have had trying out for squad positions, which has probably meant that many haven't had enough game time. Certainly it appeared at times as though some of the players had hardly met before and the nine debuts handed out in this match equalled our club record, set previously in 1945 and 1982.

We had the first half chance of the match when Athan Smith-Joseph opted to volley at goal from a very wide angle with the ball flying over the bar, but we then trailed in the 9th minute and it was a sorry story. An unnecessary back pass to Matt Walton hurried him into a clearance straight to an opponent and the ball was sent across to Harry Heath, who knocked the ball past our still retreating keeper from around eighteen yards. He got a hand to it but couldn't keep it out.

The match was fairly even from that point for the remainder of the half. In fact, it could be argued that we were holding the balance of possession and Adam Grant's shot at goal in the 28th minute would have tested Sam Marsden the home keeper, had it not taken a heavy deflection on the way which ensured that it dribbled into his arms instead. It is important to note that this was our only shot on target in the entire match.

A couple of efforts from new boys Jahobi Maher and Ryan "Butch" Smith cleared the bar as we tried to get a foothold in the match but in the 44th minute a back pass from another new boy Aaron Bogle caught Walton out and he was unable to keep the ball out of the net. It was a disastrous way to end the half.

We made a substitution at the half as Richard Pingling came on for Maher who had received a couple of knocks to his ankle and we thought we had found a way back in the 53rd minute when a deep delivery was headed into the danger area by Andy "Woody" Hall for Tiago Andrade to deftly knock the ball over the keeper, only to see the offside flag raised against him. Now this looked slightly harsh, and whilst I do not stand in the best position for these sort of things, you still get a feel for them after 40 years behind the goal and I reckon it must have been very close.

The next chance fell to the home side and Walton made a smart save. but we were extremely fortunate in the 67th minute when Ross Myers was free at the far post after a good move down the right and ball across which was smashed against the bar and over from fairly close range. Another shot just cleared our bar as Shoreham pushed for a third goal. Then another dangerous ball in was not gathered by Walton and there was panic in the six yard box, but fortunately the danger was cleared.

We had one further piece of club history when Owen Higgins came on for Grant in the 77th minute, as the new rules allow for five substitutes this year and as the first person to become an official fifth substitute, he joined an exclusive club along with the previous four; Reg Scott (1966), Tommy Tuite (1975), Steve Smith (1995), and James Moran (2008).

We had one final opportunity when Pingling struck the bar from around thirty yards, but in reality, the Shoreham defence, marshalled superbly by Dan Momah wearing the number five shirt, dealt with our threat fairly comfortably all day and insult was then added to injury in the 91st minute when the hosts scored a third goal, again created from the right wing and this time Myers couldn't miss the tap in.

Of course this is only the opening fixture of the season and things will surely improve if the friendly performances are anything to go by, but this was a worrying way to start and with the trip to Seaford Town coming up next Saturday, we will need to get better in a hurry, especially as Seaford will also be keen to bounce back from their own heavy opening day defeat at Forest Row.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Zach Powell, Andy "Woody" Hall, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Aaron Bogle, Louis Chin, Gideon Acheampong, ©, Adam Grant, Athan Smith-Joseph, Tiago Andrade, Jahobi Maher

Subs: Richard Pingling for Maher (HT), Ben King for Andrade (57), Steve Springett for Powell (69), Brad Peters for Acheampong (69), Owen Higgins for Grant (77)

# Salts falter at final friendly

25 August 2022



Leatherhead 3-0 Epsom & Ewell Pre-season Friendly - Stella Lamont Trophy Wednesday 3rd August 2022. Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk) Reporter: Richard Lambert

Tanners ease to victory. In five days we have faced two Isthmian League Step Four teams in Walton & Hersham and Leatherhead and it's fair to say there will be little between the pair as our landlords repeated the scoreline we suffered at the Elmbridge Xcel Sports Hub. As with the previous match, the Tanners could afford to miss a penalty too in their 3-0 win.

This match was listed as the Stella Lamont Trophy, named after our long-serving Club President. It is most unusual to name a trophy after someone who is still with us and indeed Stella very much is; celebrating her 94th birthday on 1st September! We also took the opportunity to show off the new kit for this season, which regrettably followed a trend of recent years in gradually becoming more white than blue, with our players almost appearing to wear white bibs across their chests!

As a larger number of players have now signed, I am able to refer to more of them by name and all eleven of our starters in this match have put pen to paper. How many of them will make the starting eleven on Saturday remains a challenge for our Management who used seventeen players and had four unused subs available too, not to mention four other signed players who were not present!

In reality this was a very similar match to our contest at Walton & Hersham, but there were a lot more goal scoring opportunities for both teams over the ninety minutes, as neither team earned top marks for their finishing. We made a bright start though and Jahobi Maher sent an early strike a yard over the bar before a Ryan "Butch" Smith free kick was headed at goal by Steve Springett, only to see the ball superbly tipped over by the Leatherhead keeper. This would prove to be our best chance of the match.

In response a tame shot from our landlords was dragged across goal, but they had more success in the 11th minute when we failed to deal with an extremely long throw in and the loose ball was drilled low past Matt Walton by Tarpey although our new keeper, who has played well in pre-season, did well to even get a hand on the shot.

We were back on the attack soon after and Athan Smith-Joseph produced a good run and cut inside his man, but fired a curling shot just over the bar from 15 yards. There were plenty more efforts on goal from either side, although most of them came from Leatherhead and as the half progressed our good start became more of a distant memory. A 37th minute far post header was a good opportunity for our opponents to extend their lead, but this was sent over the bar from fairly close range and the teams went in at the break with a 1-0 scoreline.

Smith-Joseph saw another effort just high and wide as we opened the second half, and Leatherhead nearly scored in the 58th minute after a deep corner was headed back across goal, but a low shot flew away off our post to safety.

We then had some half chances around the hour mark, firstly when Smith-Joseph's shot from the right was parried by the Leatherhead keeper, but not in the usual way, as the ball spooned up off him over the bar, dropping onto the roof of the net. Then from the corner Jubril "Jibs" Adamson was unable to deal with a Smith corner in a good position and the ball hit him and was cleared. A few minutes after this Smith struck a shot from at least thirty yards which cleared the bar by a couple of feet.

The game then stopped for six minutes while a stretcher was required for a Leatherhead player who looked in a lot of discomfort. We wish him well. On the pitch we made five substitutions, but we created less as the half progressed and conceded a second goal in the 75th minute as Tarpey latched on to a long ball in a bit too much space and clipped the ball over the advancing but exposed Walton. Walton was replaced by our other regular keeper, but he suffered a similar fate eleven minutes later when the Leatherhead number three made a fine run from the full back position and took a return pass before clipping the ball over our man for a very good goal.

Substitute Adam Grant had a late chance when he received the ball from a poor keeper clearance, but his effort from 40 yards was a few yards wide of the vacant target. For all our attacking, 3-0 was a little harsh at this point, but it nearly got worse as a clumsy foul led to a penalty, although the same post came to our rescue again and the deficit remained at three.

There is a school of thought that says friendlies against top Four sides will teach us little, compared to a match against a team of a similar level and I largely subscribe to that theory. However, these two defeats have produced some positives and we will also enter the League season with our feet firmly on the ground when we open up on Saturday at Shoreham.



# Swans glide past Salts - Walton & Hershham 3 Epsom & Ewell 0

25 August 2022



Pre-season Friendly Friday 29th July 2022 Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk) Reporter: Richard Lambert

Our pre-season has been a good one so far, and there were many positives to take from this match, despite the scoreline that just confirmed there is a large gap between Step Four and Step Six football, which we all knew anyway!

On the artificial surface at the Xcel Sports Hub; a venue where we had conceded ten goals in two previous visits, this match ended with another three goals against us, but for large periods of the match we gave as good as our opponents and the work rate was also impressive.

We conceded an early penalty after Jahobi Maher dragged down the winger, but the hosts tried to get clever, with one of those "Henry/Pires style penalties, but our keeper was alert to the danger and made a fine save from the eventual shot in the 12th minute.

We had a long range effort from new signing Tiago Andrade that wasn't far away, before Jubril "Jibs" Adamson fired a half volley just over the bar as the hosts failed to deal with a Ryan "Butch" Smith free kick, but our keeper was back in action soon after, making a fine save from an angle after a good advantage from the referee. We then trailed in the 35th minute after a near post corner was headed in from close range by Joe Hicks.

Two more saves were made by our keeper before a Smith strike from 25 yards tested the gloves of the Walton keeper, but we also saw a recent new signing, the re-joining Hakim Griffiths, knocked to the ground and he required replacement just before the break.

We were caught out at the start of the second half as a low ball in from the left was tapped in at the far post by Eddie Simon for Walton and Hershham's second goal in the 48th minute, and soon after this we made six changes, in addition to the two made either side of half time, although despite the disruption to our side the match remained competitive throughout. We clearly have a number of players fighting for places right now and all are contributing. It's a nice problem for our Management to have!

A third goal for the hosts on the hour was ruled out for offside after the Assistant's flag was raised, although much discussion ensued between the officials before the decision was finally confirmed. Six minutes later our substitute striker pinged a shot against the Walton post from 20 yards and was unlucky to see the ball fly off it across the face of the goal instead of into the net. This led to our best spell of the game with some decent football and we looked like we may get the score back to 2-1 at any moment, but as we chased the match, we unfortunately gave away another penalty in the 89th minute and by the time it was taken a minute later, Mills chose to stick with a more orthodox spot kick this time and scored their third and final goal.

Despite the scoreline it is sometimes good to lose a friendly as you can learn a lot about players in adversity. Another tough challenge awaits on Wednesday as we face Leatherhead at Fetcham Grove, but this result hasn't dented my belief in any way that we will be competing for the title this season. In fact, it might have even enhanced it a little!

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## Epsom & Ewell dominate Croydon (in football friendly).

25 August 2022



The 60 spectators who were present at Fetcham Grove on Tuesday evening witnessed an interesting match, full of scoring opportunities. Although we looked very good, particularly in the first half, Croydon, nicknamed the Trams, will have come away from this match believing that they could and should have got something out of the match on the balance of possession.

The visitors pushed us back to start with, but we took the lead in the 12th minute when a clever through ball from midfield reached Athan Smith-Joseph in space and that is always a dangerous situation for the opposition as our striker, revelling in his more central role this season, simply strolled around the keeper and planted the ball into the empty net.

A Ryan Smith free kick was superbly tipped onto the post and away six minutes later before our own keeper was in action soon after to keep out one of a number of free kicks that we conceded around the edge of the penalty area. He would repeat the save on the half hour, this time to his left, but somewhat against the run of play we extended our lead in the 37th minute after Louis Chin received the ball twenty yards out after good work from Smith-Joseph and he smashed the ball into the net from twenty yards. The shot took a slight deflection, quite probably off one of our own players, but had it been a defender, there's no way it would have been classed as an own goal, so I have credited it to Chinny.

The visitors had a final opportunity just before half time, but an unmarked header was sent straight at our keeper.

We made six changes at the half and many other substitutions would follow throughout the second period. We made it 3-0 in the 48th minute when a Smith free kick was fumbled by the Croydon keeper, and although he recovered well to scoop the ball away before it crossed the line, the loose ball was tapped in by Adam Grant.

We conceded a penalty in the 62nd minute which was dispatched, and then we had a bit of a scuffle following a foul which led to a slight delay, but we scored a fourth goal in the 74th minute after a fine crossfield pass from Jahobi Maher found our striker, whose shot was almost stopped by the keeper, but the ball still had enough on it to cross the line before a defender could reach it. The visitors had the final chance of the evening but a fine defensive block preserved the score line and the whistle blew soon after.

Over the course of the match we fielded 22 players, which tells me that there is still much work to do before this squad is trimmed down to a manageable amount. However, the strength in depth across the squad appears impressive at this stage of the season. It will be interesting to see how this squad copes in the remaining two friendlies, both of which are challenging ones away to Step Four teams Walton & Hersham and Leatherhead.

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## Epsom & Ewell 1-1 Horsham YMCA

25 August 2022



Pre-season Friendly Saturday 23rd July 2022. We may not have been able to make it four wins in a row in our latest friendly encounter, but we were by no means outclassed and held our own throughout against Step Five Horsham YMCA and scored a second half equaliser to record a deserved 1-1 draw at River Lane, Fetcham; home of Leatherhead Youth FC on Saturday. Around fifty spectators were present.

The match started quietly enough although the visitors nearly opened the scoring with a lob over our exposed keeper that landed on the roof of the net. We then had a couple of incidents that led to the referee asking both Managers whether they wanted to continue the match, which after a small break, we did. By this time we had gone behind as a Horsham YMCA free kick squirmed off our keeper low down and went up off him into the roof of the net. This goal came in the 20th minute.

Although we were not playing that well we did manage to fashion an equaliser five minutes before the break when a slide rule pass inside the defender was squared across goal by our right winger for a straightforward tap in from the same player who had netted our winning goal at Dorking Wanderers. It was a smart goal and without a doubt was the best move of the match.

Six changes were made at half time, as we shuffled the pack on another hot day and the second half remained very even, although in the final twenty minutes we made a couple of decent chances and probably finished slightly the stronger of the two teams. Certainly though a draw was a fair result and I felt that neither side had done enough to show they were worthy of the win.

It was also clear that our Management were not particularly happy with the performance and clearly will be seeking an improvement on Tuesday when Croydon are the visitors to Fetcham Grove. We then follow this with a pair of extremely challenging friendlies against Step Four clubs; at Walton & Hersham on Friday night and at Leatherhead the following Wednesday before our League fixtures kick off at Shoreham on Saturday August 6th.

Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk)

## Epsom and Ewell FC on a friendly hat-trick.

25 August 2022



Following 2 wins out of 3 Epsom and Ewell FC went away to Dorking Wanderers XI and won 1 - 2. This 4th pre-season friendly was played on Saturday 16th July 2022. Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk). Reporter: Richard Lambert

A hot and sunny Meadowbank was the place to be for just over 80 spectators as our pre-season friendlies continued with a 2-1 win against a sort of Dorking Wanderers XI.

The opponents were billed as both an XI and a B team, but the advertising came from the Reserve team, so it's hard to tell exactly which team they were made up from. Clearly though they knew each other well and were extremely young and fit, with the keeper advising me that he was just 15!

And it has to be said our opponents held more of the ball in this encounter than we did, although we restricted them to just a couple of shots on target and when we had chances, we actually looked far more threatening than they did, with a former Epsom player being involved in most of our attacks.

Our first chance came in the 14th minute as a low ball in from Athan Smith-Joseph was just ahead of our man running in, but we took the lead a minute later after another former Epsom player intercepted the ball in midfield and spread the pass out to Smith-Joseph who cut onto his right foot and steered the ball into the far corner from just outside the penalty area. He then had another shot on target on the half hour, but it was unluckily blocked by a team mate.

We had a large drinks break and then followed it with an injury delay as our player who had created the goal fell awkwardly and had to be replaced. In all over nine minutes extra were played. We then made six more changes to the line up and changed our colours from blue and white to yellow and could have extended our lead after Josh Alder got through on goal, but his shot was saved comfortably and in the 49th minute the home side equalised with a close range shot that our keeper was unable to block.

Further changes followed throughout the match as the heat continued to beat down and a really good take down of a crossfield pass gave us another opportunity, but the shot went into the side netting. Fortunately that same player would get another chance in the 90th minute as he ran on to a good ball over the top of the defence and his close range finish gave the keeper no chance, and our first ever win at the rebuilt Meadowbank, albeit not for a competitive fixture.

But that will have to wait until the season commences as we are scheduled to visit here twice more, and on this display we have to assume that if this is the make up of the Dorking Wanderers Reserve side for this season then they will be right up there battling for the title too. Our side is still being tweaked with at this stage of the season though and I believe we will improve further before the season commences.

Our next two friendlies against Croydon and Leatherhead Youth have been cancelled, although the Croydon one has been moved to the following Tuesday, 26th July, and will now be played at Leatherhead instead. There may still be a friendly arranged for this coming Saturday, but based on the club's current poor release of information to its supporters, I doubt we will find much more out until just before the day, if indeed there is one at all.

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## Epsom and Ewell FC win 2, lose 1 in pre-season friendlies.

25 August 2022

Reports courtesy of Richard Lambert of [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk)

**Farnham Town 3-2 Epsom & Ewell** Pre-season Friendly Saturday 2nd July 2022.

The artificial surface at Kings College in Guildford was the place to be to witness the opening match of the Anthony Jupp and Liam Giles era.

Farnham are a Step Five team and they held the balance of the play in the first half, although only broke through in the third minute of injury time when a near post right wing cross was converted with a sidefooted volley past our keeper.

The half time whistle blew immediately after the restart, and both teams changed a number of personnel and in our case, the formation too. This bore fruit within 35 seconds as a smart strike from the left about fifteen yards out put us back on level terms. We then hit the face of the bar with a shot from the left before another shot took a slight deflection and came back off the Farnham post.

Unfortunately a foul just inside the penalty area gave our opponents a spot kick which was converted in the 73rd minute and then two minutes after we had hit the post once again in the 87th minute, Farnham scored a third goal with a fine finish into the top corner from just inside the box.

This third goal was a little harsh on our team, but in the 91st minute we did get a second of our own when our earlier scorer latched on to a fine pass, held off his man and steered the ball under the keeper from an angle about ten yards out for his second of the match. It was the least we deserved, having also hit their woodwork on three occasions during that period!

As always at this stage of the season the performance is more important than the result, but with so many players absent

it is hard to say much more than the scoreline was about fair, largely due to Farnham holding a greater balance of play in the first half. Suffice to say our new Management seemed happy enough with the way things went and that's all that really matters at this point. We move on to meet another Step Five team when we visit Hassocks next Saturday.

### **Hassocks 0-1 Epsom & Ewell Pre-season Friendly Saturday 9th July 2022.**

It is generally accepted that the most pretty ground in the area is Arundel's; sitting in the shadow of its imposing castle. However, Hassocks home ground of The Beacon would certainly fit in the tier just below that, and on a gorgeous day that was probably too hot for football an impressive crowd around the 130 mark were present to witness our victory, although once again the support from an Epsom point of view was really low. This was a pity as the performance showed a clear upgrade from the previous week, despite the heat, although admittedly both teams were almost entirely changed at half time, so most players only played one half of the match.

This was an incredibly unusual result. In my forty years as a regular supporter I can only recall a couple of previous occasions where the only goal of a match occurred in the opening minute, but that's exactly what happened in this contest. There were more new faces on show at Hassocks, including another former Epsom player from 15 years ago, although the only goal after just 18 seconds, came from a familiar face as Athan Smith-Joseph collected the ball some thirty yards out and strolled unchallenged to the edge of the penalty area before casually striking the ball into the corner of the net. It's possible that our opponents hadn't realised we were playing three at the back to start the match and lost track of the extra man we had further forward, but either way we caught the hosts cold with this strike.

From that point, the home team had as much of the match as we did and had a couple of really good chances to equalise; firstly in the 38th minute when a deep ball to the left was volleyed across goal only for the Hassocks 10 to strike over the bar from close range, and then in the 79th minute when a free kick to the far post was headed against our crossbar and as the ball bounced down and then up again, it wouldn't come down in time for the incoming striker who headed the loose ball over. Our (currently) unnamed keeper, who was different to last week's, also had a good game and made a couple of solid saves, but the match was largely devoid of real goalmouth action and this was a fairly attritional contest at times, which isn't always a bad thing when you are leading.

Did we deserve the win? Maybe a draw would have been fairer over the 90 minutes, but I also felt we were worth a draw at Farnham Town last week and we didn't get it! Whilst the actual result isn't that important at this time of the season, I felt we saw the match out well and this bodes well for the future when some of our other new names will be appearing to strengthen the competition for a place. All in all though; sunny day, lovely ground and my team won. Why would you want to be anywhere else if you truly are a genuine and loyal Epsom supporter?

### **AFC Uckfield Town 0-2 Epsom & Ewell Pre-season Friendly Tuesday 12th July 2022**

In my last report I referred to the clean sheet secured at Hassocks being our first in a long time and we have now added a second just three days later with a good 2-0 win at Step Five AFC Uckfield Town at the Oaks.

We had visited this ground before, back in 2009 for an F.A. Cup tie when one half of the merged Uckfield club were previously known as Wealden FC, and it remains as picturesque as it was back then. Around 65 people attended on a warm and sticky evening to watch the home team hold the upper hand in early proceedings, but without really looking like they would break through.

However, the pattern of the match changed in our favour in the 21st minute. I wouldn't normally advise the name of an unsigned scorer, but seeing as he did it himself on social media, I can advise that Jahobi Maher collected the ball just over 45 yards out and launched a strike at goal. The keeper stumbled, at which point you knew instantly that it was going in for a spectacular opener.

Confidence grew from that point and we should have made it 2-0 with a great move, but Ricardo Fernandes blazed over from the edge of the penalty area. In response the home side flicked a shot at goal but our keeper was able to deal with it comfortably and we extended our lead in the 42nd minute when new signing Nick Wilson met a long throw with a glancing header across and beyond their keeper from around eight yards out, and only a great save from the home keeper stopped a spectacular third goal after a good move concluded with a superb volley from the edge of the area, but the ball was tipped over the bar.

There were less changes than usual at the break with only three players coming on, bringing the total of subs up to four at that point after one of our players had limped off ten minutes from half time. One of these was our keeper from last year, Kane Charles and he would prove to be very busy in the opening quarter of an hour, making a couple of spectacular saves, although he needed some help in the 49th minute when a defensive header back into our penalty area enabled a home striker to shoot at goal, but Louis Chin was perfectly positioned to head the ball off the line via the crossbar and out to safety!

We made four more changes after an hour and the contest, which had been a bit niggly throughout to this point then flared up again after one of our players crashed into the hoardings near the dugouts which required his replacement, but the home side seemed to run out of ideas a little and the game ended in a fairly comfortable 2-0 win in the end.

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## **Phil Walker's final pass....**

25 August 2022



Richard Lambert pays homage to the late great footballer who played for Epsom and Ewell FC.

[Photo: **Phil Walker** pictured running the line at West Street on 24th October 1976 in a Charity Match as a **Dennis Waterman XI** defeated an **Epsom XI** 11-10 with the recently deceased Waterman scoring a hat-trick. Over 2,000 were present along with many other famous names like Alan Mullery, Dave Sexton, Tony Gubba and Trevor Lee.]

**Photo: Gemini Reynolds**

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 our club lost one of its most famous names when the death was announced of Philip Leonardus Walker at the tragically young age of 67.

Phil was born in Parsons Green on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1954 and went to Battersea County School in Culvert Road, Battersea where he met another youngster, Trevor Lee. Their stories would of course become inextricably linked, although had Phil been born three days later, he would have been in a different school year and their paths may not have even crossed!

Both of course connected well at a time when it must have been extremely difficult growing up as a young black man in South London, but the pair would become footballing pioneers in arguably the most hostile of environments, the Den; home of Millwall FC.

Although both were very good at football, they went in opposite directions at first. Phil was working in a factory in Acton and got talking to a workmate who was at Wingate F.C. so he went and played with them, scored in his first match and stayed a while.

However, in 1973 he teamed up with Trevor again at Cobham alongside another player in Steve Jones. All three would then sign for Epsom and Ewell in the summer of 1974.



**Saturday 08/02/75 v Hornchurch F.A.Vase - Won 1-0.**

**Back Row: Steve Jones, Ted Yorke, Chris Page, Johnny Eales, Dave Worby, Trevor Lee, Willie Bennett, Dave Ritman**

**Front Row: Tommy Tuite, Trevor Wales, Phil Walker, Pat O'Connell, Alan Webb**

Our club were of course just picking themselves up after years in the doldrums and had just finished as runners-up in the Surrey Senior League, but Manager Pat O'Connell; a former professional himself at Fulham, wanted our club to achieve much more.

Phil joined our club a month after Trevor, due to a holiday in America, and made his debut on Saturday 7th September

1974 when we defeated Chobham 3-0 in a Surrey Senior League Cup tie at West Street, but it was a slow start for the new lad who only made four first team appearances by the December. However, he forced his way into the team as the season progressed and by the end of May we had won the League and Charity Cup double with Phil firmly entrenched in the number 10 shirt.



***Phil scores our only goal in the F.A. Vase win over Hornchurch on 8th February 1975***

***Johnny Eales is the other Epsom player in the photograph and to my knowledge is the only other member of the 12 man squad to have passed away as I write this.***

Of course most supporters will remember that 1974/75 season for our run to Wembley Stadium in the very first FA Vase competition, where Phil was a focal part of the run. He scored the only goal in our Quarter-Final victory over Hornchurch and the winner against Stamford in the first leg of the Semi-Final, which was won 2-1 and essentially earned the trip to Wembley, following our goalless draw in the second leg.



***Trevor Lee and Phil Walker share a moment at the F.A. Vase Final post-match get together at the Cavalier in Wallington on 19th April 1975 with Manager Pat O'Connell and his Assistant Arthur Evans***

***Our boys celebrate with the Surrey Senior League Trophy at West Street on 22nd May 1975***

Although the day at Wembley ended with a 2-1 defeat, our club was on the football map again and in the early part of 1975/76 Millwall Manager Gordon Jago came calling. The new man in charge already knew of our club and ground, having played against us in the early fifties as Captain of Maidstone United in the Corinthian League. Jago actually took four of our players for trials at Cold Blow Lane. Willie Bennett, one of our finest defenders in club history, and Tommy Tuite, who would become our greatest ever goal scorer were also asked to attend along with Trevor and Phil, but ultimately injury hurt Bennett's chances, while Tuite was considered too small at five feet eight, ironically the same height as Kevin Keegan! Both played matches for Millwall in the Football Combination, before returning to leafy Ewell Village.

However, Trevor and Phil were successful and Phil made the last of his 41 appearances for us against Southall and Ealing Borough (who had another non-league success playing in their team by the name of Alan Devonshire) in an F.A. Cup replay. Phil scored 19 goals in that time. Trevor would return for five appearances in 1985/86, but Phil would never wear our colours again.

Both players were due to sign for Millwall on 13th November 1975 live on the main regional news show of day, The Today show; a programme that would become infamous just over a year later for an interview featuring the Sex Pistols, but back then it was very popular. However, only Trevor made the show as Phil had to have x-rays but he would soon sign a two year contract in December 1975. Both made an instant impact on their debut, with Trevor setting up Phil to score the only goal against Mansfield Town at the Cold Blow Lane end at the old Den, and Phil made 35 appearances that season as promotion to Division Three was achieved.

Despite the obvious fact that they were the only black players in the Lions team at a sad time in our distant past when the National Front were regularly acknowledged on television as the fourth main political party, and even before the implementation of the Race Relations Act in 1976 (which expanded on the previous Acts from 1965 and 1968 and properly started to give some real teeth to the subject of discrimination) they became extremely popular at a ground where the word "hostile" was a tag that many of their supporters embellished as a badge of honour. They remain so to this day.



***Promotional photo from Millwall showing Gordon Jago after capturing both Phil and Trevor from Epsom and Ewell FC***

Both players became pioneers for their club, although Phil didn't stay that long. He made 167 appearances for them, with 22 goals before moving on. Whilst there he was honoured for his contributions to sport by the Muhammad Ali Scheme in Brixton, along with Olympic Champion Daley Thompson and World Champion Boxer John Conteh.

To give full details of Phil's professional career and achievements, it is much better to refer you to the clubs for whom he played from this point, as they will all have written their own tributes. Suffice to say though, he signed for Charlton Athletic for £120,000 in the summer of 1979 before having a loan spell at Gillingham.

He then made an unusual career move in those days by going abroad in 1983 when he moved to Hong Kong to play for Eastern AA before moving again, this time to Portugal where he joined Leixoes, Boavista and FC Maia before retiring at the age of 41. He also told me that the best ground he ever played at (excluding Epsom's appearance at Wembley Stadium) was Benfica's old Stadium of Light.

He also did some coaching at Maia in the early 2000s and this was put to good use in recent years when he started to run his own soccer school at Wandle Recreation Centre in Mapleton Road, Wandsworth which continues to this day.

Most people will not know that Phil was actually a member of a very talented family and had a couple of brothers; Dennis who also played regularly for Epsom and Ewell, making 102 appearances and scoring 12 goals, and Larrington (Larry) who was a very well-known actor with roles in Minder, The Bill, Inspector Morse and The Chinese Detective amongst others, yet was versatile enough to also be a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company and was a good friend of comedian Lenny Henry. Also, his nephew Kyle Walker-Peters is of course currently a professional footballer with Southampton.

I was extremely fortunate to meet both Phil and Trevor in 2015 when I noticed that Phil had started following our club on Twitter and dropped him a line to see if he would like to have a chat and he was more than happy to meet up and would bring Trevor along too.

When we met that evening I found two extremely modest people who knew they were breaking down barriers and raising the public's perception at a time when it desperately needed to be, but you got the impression that they saw themselves as simply footballers. I didn't feel the need to ask them the same questions they must have heard hundreds of times about their race, and in all honesty, I'd have probably been able to find out those answers from many other previous interviews. I wanted to concentrate on their time at Epsom and Ewell and I think it must have been quite refreshing for them to answer some different questions. In more recent years the Achtung Millwall podcast interviewed Phil and whilst it obviously concentrates more on his time there, it is well worth a listen too.

I said my goodbyes that evening and they said they would try to get along to an Epsom game one day. Regrettably now Phil will never make that journey, but he will never be forgotten at this club while I am here to pass the baton and remind people of our former greats, of which Phil was certainly one!



**Trevor Lee and Phil Walker in the summer of 2015**

More coverage of our great Epsom and Ewell Football Club on their website <http://www.eefconline.co.uk/>

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## Farnham Town 3-2 Epsom & Ewell

25 August 2022



Pre-season Friendly Saturday 2nd July 2022. Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk). Reporter: Richard Lambert

New era kicks off with narrow defeat. The artificial surface at Kings College in Guildford was the place to be to witness the opening match of the Anthony Jupp and Liam Giles era, although rather disappointingly out of our regular supporters, only two Committee members, plus myself and my boy Nathan were there to witness it in an attendance of 15.

Pre-season friendlies are not for everyone though and of course many players take the field who will never make the first team squad, so maybe some supporters aren't that concerned! Obviously, due to the time of the season with many players not signed up and the recent departures of Luke Miller and Tommy Smith, I won't be releasing any names here, except to say that many players were away this week and that out of the twenty-two players present, of whom twenty had a run out, there were only three players on the field who finished the season with us. There were also two former Epsom players on show.

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The half time whistle blew immediately after the restart, and both teams changed a number of personnel and in our case, the formation too. This bore fruit within 35 seconds as a smart strike from the left about fifteen yards out put us back on level terms. We then hit the face of the bar with a shot from the left before another shot took a slight deflection and came back off the Farnham post.

Unfortunately a foul just inside the penalty area gave our opponents a spot kick which was converted in the 73rd minute and then two minutes after we had hit the post once again in the 87th minute, Farnham scored a third goal with a fine finish into the top corner from just inside the box.

This third goal was a little harsh on our team, but in the 91st minute we did get a second of our own when our earlier scorer latched on to a fine pass, held off his man and steered the ball under the keeper from an angle about ten yards out for his second of the match. It was the least we deserved, having also hit their woodwork on three occasions during that period!

As always at this stage of the season the performance is more important than the result, but with so many players absent it is hard to say much more than the scoreline was about fair, largely due to Farnham holding a greater balance of play in the first half. Suffice to say our new Management seemed happy enough with the way things went and that's all that really matters at this point. We move on to meet another Step Five team when we visit Hassocks next Saturday.

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## Epsom & Ewell F.C. announce Anthony Jupp as new manager

25 August 2022



Epsom & Ewell F.C. have announced that Anthony Jupp will become their new head coach, following the departure of Jamie Byatt. Jupp was formally the manager of Horley Town F.C.

Epsom & Ewell finished in 6th place in the Southern Combination League this season, and no doubt be looking to strengthen their squad over the summer.

Anthony will assume this position immediately, as Epsom & Ewell F.C. look to take on their pre-season friendlies...

Epsom & Ewell Times would like to congratulate Anthony wholeheartedly, as we all look forward to watching Epsom & Ewell F.C. again next season.

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## Midhurst & Easebourne 2 - 1 Epsom & Ewell, Southern Combination League - Division One Playoff Semi-Final

25 August 2022



**Reporter: Richard Langley, Photos by Gemma Jarman**

**Report Source: eefconline.co.uk**

A poor start leads to a premature season's end

After three very tight meetings between ourselves and Midhurst & Easebourne this season, this Playoff Semi-Final always threatened to follow a similar path and over the ninety minutes we witnessed another even contest. Unfortunately, a poor opening twenty minutes left us 2-0 down and we were never able to recover, eventually losing by the same score as we had just four days previously in the Division One Cup Final. Both teams appeared to be at full strength for this match, although for us that meant once again that Player/Manager Jamie Byatt was unable to take the field. At the back, Gideon Acheampong was able to start and upfront Mario Qurassaca made his first start. As a result, Jerry Antwi and Mo Cisse started on the bench, although both would enter the playing arena later.



For those who noted my gladiatorial reference to an arena here, it is largely because of the way these two teams squared up following the conclusion of the aforementioned Cup Final, and if I'm honest I expected more fireworks here. However, Referee Paul Saunders was totally on top of this match and ensured that hardly any extra-curricular activity took place this time. We had an early free-kick from which Ricardo Fernandes gave Josh Bird some early catching practice, but were behind in the sixth minute when Lewis Hamilton drove through our static defence and slotted the ball past Sheikh Ceesay from close range.

This was an awful start and it got worse in the 22nd minute when a deep ball in was met by a looping header towards goal, but somehow Liam Dreckmann was able to reach it first to force the ball in from close range. We didn't know it for certain at the time, but the damage was already done, although we fought back well from this point and made it a much more even contest for the remainder of the afternoon. A corner was flicked onto the far post where Tyreke Leslie struck at goal from a narrow angle, but Bird was equal to the shot and turned it around the post. Next to try was Mike Hill with a long-range strike that Bird clawed away from under pressure from Qurassaca, although our striker was flagged offside, so it wouldn't have counted as he was definitely in Bird's line of sight. Then in the 39th minute, we pulled a goal back and it was a bit of a strange one really as a ball over the top fell kindly for Qurassaca who then failed to control it, but as a result of this, Bird came out of goal only to then realise that he wasn't going to get there in time and Qurassaca then nodded the ball over him and it bounced over the line and up into the roof of the net from eighteen yards. He had a half-chance to score another as a deep cross was headed over at full stretch, but as the halftime whistle went, it looked like we had finally got going and there was still plenty of time to go to salvage this.

An early Hill header in the opening minute was covered easily by Bird but the majority of this half would be spent in midfield as the home side kept us largely subdued. In the Cup match they had negated our threat on the wings by putting two men on them; a trick Roffey had also used against us back in March, but in this second half both Luke Miller and Athan Smith-Joseph seemed to play deeper, which meant that our service to Qurassaca was extremely limited and he too then dropped further back leaving us with no one upfront. Midhurst then cut us apart on the hour with a deep ball over on the left that was volleyed across goal but fortunately with no one there to meet it.

Unfortunately, we were then forced into a couple of substitutions as Hill departed, but also Brad Peters who appeared to suffer a recurrence of the injury he picked up at Mile Oak seven days previously. They were replaced by Cisse and Antwi respectively. Miller's shot was then blocked by a defender before Bird clawed away another deep delivery. We had a little incident when Dreckmann squared up to Ceesay who pushed back and I thought that the award of a yellow card for both was a little harsh on our keeper. Ceesay then made an important save after our defender missed a ball in from the left, but our man was out quickly to smother the ball which squirted out for a corner, which was then headed over by Marcus Bedford. Josh Uzun entered the fray with five minutes left as we made an attacking substitution, but five minutes from time Acheampong then dragged Bedford back as he threatened to get through and picked up a yellow card that could have been red, had he committed the offence a little closer to goal instead of back on the halfway line.

As time ran out we had a bit of good pressure and Fernandes' low shot from outside the penalty area was powerful enough, but wide, and Smith-Joseph had the last meaningful attempt on goal in the fourth of seven minutes of injury time, but Bird was able to make the easy save.

And this summed up the match and to a certain extent the season. We were never really able to hurt our opponents enough in this match and you just felt that a fully fit Byatt would have been the difference in many of these matches this season. As I look back at the stats I can see that he scored thirty-one goals in twenty-eight appearances, of which we lost just six, but the unseen statistic here is that he was unable to take the field in thirteen matches and we lost six of those too. Without him, we just weren't the same and at the age of forty, it will be interesting to see whether he retains the tag of Player/Manager next season or whether we have seen the last of him as a player.

So Midhurst & Easebourne progress to a playoff final at home to Shoreham, who defeated Seaford Town 2-0 on their own pitch, while we now face another season in Sussex at Step Six, our fifth season at that level. There are worse places to play football without a doubt, but it feels somewhat underwhelming that a team this good has fallen away so badly this season, finishing with four straight losses. For sure it has been a horrible end to the season if you are an Epsom fan and no, there is no time left to bounce back.

**Epsom & Ewell: Sheikh Ceesay, Gideon Acheampong, Louis Chin, Brad Peters (c), Steve Springett, Luke Miller, Athan Smith-Joseph, Ricardo Fernandes, Mario Qurassaca, Mike Hill, Tyreke Leslie**

**Subs: Mo Cisse for Hill (64), Jerry Antwi for Peters (64), Josh Uzun for Chin (85)**

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## Match Report: Midhurst & Easebourne 2 - 1 Epsom & Ewell, Southern Combination Cup Final

25 August 2022



**Reporter: Richard Langley, Photos by Gemma Jarman**

**Report Source: [eefconline.co.uk](http://eefconline.co.uk)**

### **Salts fall in the final seconds**

After two very even contests already this season, it was no surprise that this third meeting at the neutral venue of Alfold FC produced another close encounter. Unfortunately for our boys, a 96th-minute goal from James Liddiard came too late to reply to and we had to accept defeat by two goals to one.

With a very important playoff match coming up against the same opposition on Saturday, I wondered how the teams would line up, but both went as strong as they could. Brad Peters was good to go at the back after limping off on Saturday at Mile Oak, while Mike Hill was back in the starting line up as was Mo Cisse. Kofi Quartey and Josh Uzun found themselves on the bench alongside the fit-again Gideon Acheampong.

And we got off to a flyer. Athan Smith-Joseph broke through the middle and had time to steady himself before slotting the ball low to the right of Midhurst keeper Josh Bird to open the scoring in the fourth minute.

The opposition sent a dangerous free-kick through our six-yard area and out the other side, but this was to be a game of few actual chances. Midhurst nearly got back on level terms after a low ball in from the left was well blocked and then kicked away by Sheikh Ceesay just before the half-hour mark before Hill and Liam Dreckmann picked up a yellow card each for an episode of handbags. This was typical of much of the first half as a niggly match was played out, aided and abetted by a referee who wanted to stop play every few minutes, although he also missed Hill getting clattered on the side of the head. Then when Hill was kicked up in the air by Harry Giles he received a lecture, but no card.

It was apparent though that our opponents were beginning to gain the upper hand in the match and they deservedly drew level in the 39th minute with an acrobatic overhead kick from Marcus Bedford from close range that gave Ceesay no chance.

At the half, Hill was replaced by Acheampong with Louis Chin moving into midfield and despite the loss of our gifted playmaker, our team began to tick a little better as a result. Ricardo Fernandes made a good run on the left only for his cross to be palmed away by Bird just ahead of Tyreke Leslie before Luke Miller tried his luck in the 69th minute with a powerful strike from a very narrow-angle, but he was also off target.

We had a flashpoint in the 71st minute when Bird was out quickly to clear a through ball just ahead of Fernandes and on his way back to goal he patted our man on the head, which Fernandes clearly didn't like and his reaction earned him a yellow card after the obligatory ten-man scuffle had settled down. Meanwhile, Bird wasn't even spoken to!

In the 76th minute Mario Qurassaca made his debut, coming on for Leslie as we began to threaten a little more. Cisse struck well from 25 yards and was inches wide of the post with Bird unsure and scrambling, although at the other end we were then caught out by a deep ball from the right, only for substitute Will Essai to blaze over from a decent position about twelve yards out.

Then in the 89th minute we had a golden opportunity as a Peters pass rebounded kindly for Qurassaca who was through on goal as a result, but after riding a challenge he then dragged his shot just beyond Bird's right hand post from twelve yards with the other side of the goal looking like the better option.

Uzun came on for Cisse as we approached injury time, presumably ahead of what was looking like a sure-fire penalty shootout, but Midhurst had one more card to play and a low near post strike was kept out by Ceesay, but only for a corner. From the delivery James Liddiard rose highest to meet the ball, glancing it in from close range in the sixth minute of injury time. Ceesay was appealing for a foul and it did appear that he may well have been held back, but the offence wasn't spotted and seconds after the restart the match was over.

Having spoken to a number of people after the match, no one could work out exactly why we played as much as six minutes extra time, but this was almost forgotten as upon the final whistle there was a big scuffle between the players which seemed to go on for quite a while and when the smoke cleared and everyone had calmed down Jerry Antwi had received a red card. I don't believe this will keep him out of Saturday's rematch in Midhurst, but it would definitely rule him out of any playoff Final should we get there.

Did we deserve to lose this cup final? No, we didn't, but equally, it could be argued that we didn't do enough to win it either, although we did improve in the second half. It was a tight match that just didn't go our way. Maybe on Saturday, the positions will be reversed, but one thing appears certain. It should be another close match!

**Epsom & Ewell: Sheikh Ceesay, Louis Chin, Jerry Antwi, Brad Peters (c), Steve Springett, Mo Cisse, Athan Smith-Joseph, Ricardo Fernandes, Tyreke Leslie, Mike Hill, Luke Miller**

**Subs: Gideon Acheampong for Hill (HT), Mario Qurassaca for Leslie (76), Josh Uzun for Cisse (89)**



# Match Report: Epsom & Ewell 1 - 2 Dorking Wanderers Reserve, Southern Combination League - Division One

25 August 2022



**Reporter: Richard Lambert, Photos by Gemma Jarman**

**Report source: eefconline.co.uk**

With our aspirations of the title mathematically disappearing on Saturday, our hopes of a home playoff match took a massive knock with a 2-1 home defeat against Dorking Wanderers Reserves who became the second club to record a "double" over us in the process. Results elsewhere meant that we dropped back below our opponents, but more significantly in terms of playoffs we also slipped behind Seaford Town and even a win at Mile Oak on Saturday will not guarantee us a home match in the post-season lottery, with a trip to Seaford now looking the most likely outcome.

Worse still, this great club I have supported loyally for forty years and which used to be such an inclusive and friendly, family community outfit, but nowadays only pays lip service to those attributes, showed a complete and utter lack of class in refusing to hold a minute's silence for former Scottish Amateur International player Gerry O'Rourke, who made 43 appearances for us in 1976/77, scoring twelve goals, and had passed away eight days previously. No reason was provided for the refusal and in my time here nobody has ever knowingly been denied a minute's silence, be it player, official or long-term supporter.

Following our win at Arundel on Saturday both Tommy Smith and Athan Smith-Joseph were unable to go in this match and this was unfortunate as I'm certain that both would have made a difference in this encounter. The visitors opened up by putting a decent chance wide in the opening minutes while Mike Hill struck at goal from distance but without troubling Barnett in the visitor's goal. Then we had the further misfortune as Manager Jamie Byatt limped off, clearly frustrated and annoyed in the 20th minute.

We had shaded possession to this point, but without providing much of a real threat. Ricardo Fernandes did well on the right-wing to deliver a ball across goal but there was no one there except for Hill at the back post, and his delivery back in was then miscued by Fernandes as he tried a spectacular volley.

We went behind in the 34th minute when George Membrillera received the ball about ten yards out and turned his defender far too easily, rolling the ball back across Sheikh Ceesay for the opening goal. Things became worse when Nabeel Ghannam struck at goal from at least twenty yards out just before half time and the ball sailed over Ceesay's head and into the net for a second goal, although our keeper redeemed himself with a good save from Conan Torpey who had broken through on goal moments later. Unfortunately, almost the final act of the first half was the departure of Hill into the dressing room as he was struggling with his breathing after putting in two tremendous shifts for us in the last week. His reappearance for the playoff matches will be absolutely crucial to our hopes.

With no Byatt and no Hill, it was always going to be an uphill shift for our boys in the second half, but they made a decent fist of it. Daryl Spiers came on for his debut after joining from Horley Town in relief of Tre Towers and we nearly pulled one back through another sub, Tyreke Leslie after a corner reached him at the far post, but his shot was blocked by Barnett's legs. Minutes later Luke Miller struck at goal, only for the ball to strike Kofi Quartey and deflect just wide of the post. It could have gone anywhere!

Josh Uzun was next to the show, and he reached a ball ahead of Barnett, but the keeper stood his ground and he had to pass back out and the danger was cleared. The visitors were being pushed further back though, with Quartey causing his defender a lot of problems and Miller attacking from the left and in the 66th minute, his run was ended abruptly by a defender in the penalty area. However, Uzun's spot-kick was a really poor one by his standards, straight at the keeper and without any real power and Barnett was actually down to save before the ball got there. This was probably why he was unable to hold on to it, but we were unable to get the loose ball in and the danger was cleared again.

Next to try was Fernandes after Quartey was brought down, but his free-kick from twenty yards just dipped over the bar, clipping the netting on its way down. Then Miller struck at goal, but it was just going wide before Leslie got ahead to the ball, but couldn't get it on target despite being only a few yards out.

The visitors were picking up yellow cards on a regular basis, three of them for delaying restarts, or in Nathan Hawkins' case, simply throwing the ball away over the fence! We were piling on the pressure and Spiers sent a header wide from a deep Louis Chin free-kick before Spiers found Quartey in a good position, only for our man to lob the ball well over the

bar.

We finally opened our account in the 89th minute when a deep Spiers ball in was flicked on to Quartey at the far post and his volley sent the ball back across goal and in off the far post. There was still time to save a point, but when the ball fell to Leslie at the far post with the keeper committed, he missed the target from close range! We kept pushing and Miller sent another dangerous ball in left-footed, only for Quartey to miss the ball which was then cleared.

By the end of a frustrating ninety minutes, it is fair to say that we definitely deserved something from this match, but when you look at the league table, you will see that a point makes no real difference to our situation. We needed all three and we failed to get them and will now almost certainly have to travel larger distances if we are to gain promotion now. It isn't beyond us, assuming we can get some of our injured players back and the good news for us is that we don't have to meet our local Dorking rivals again this season. It was about the only bit of good news though.

**Epsom & Ewell: Sheikh Ceesay, Louis Chin, Jerry Antwi, Brad Peters (c), Steve Springett, Tre Towers, Luke Miller, Mike Hill, Jamie Byatt, Josh Uzun, Ricardo Fernandes**

**Subs: Tyreke Leslie for Byatt (20) Kofi Quartey for Hill (45), Daryl Spiers for Towers (49)**