

## A Nice Xmas Double for Epsom & Ewell FC

22 December 2025



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

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

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

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

### First Half

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

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

### Half-time: 0-0

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

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

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

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

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

### What's Next?

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

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



## Cobham Cruise Past Epsom & Ewell in 4-0 Chalky Lane Defeat

22 December 2025



Epsom and Ewell FC 0 - 4 Cobham Combined Counties League Premier South. Venue Chalky Lane Chessington.

The Salts succumbed to their worst home defeat of the season, losing 0-4 to Cobham. The fact that Cobham are running away with the league (13 points clear with 2 games in hand on 2nd place) meant it would be a difficult game, but unfortunately a poor performance made it easy for them, and they didn't have to get out of second gear in order to claim the 3 points in front of 101 fans.

Injuries and suspensions meant we had to move players around again, although, after the fact, the suspensions were probably best today rather than Tuesday evening, with a more winnable game v Badshot Lea.

Sami Nabbad returned in goal, Shane Dunne came into midfield as Adam Green went to centre-back in place of the suspended Antonios Nazareth, Callum O'Keeffe returned in place of Jason Bloor, Filip Ksaidz replaced Andrew Herring, and finally Karl Bailey came in for Ali Fofahan.

There was a little bit of hope in the early stages as Luis Oliveira managed to get to the goal line in the 2nd minute, but he was forced out by three defenders and unable to get the cross in, and the ball ricocheted off him, not even getting the corner. Cobham had the first chance of the afternoon when No. 9 Marklew had a

shot across the goal after a good move down their left. Fortunately, there was no one coming in on the far post — something that was to change shortly. Nabbad was forced to make a couple of diving stops to prevent the ball going across the goal. He then had a poor kick-out and his ball went straight to a Cobham player who tried to play in No. 10 Hayford, but fortunately there was a bit too much on the pass and it ran out for a goal kick.

We then lost Shane Dunne to a knee injury after 15 minutes which would cause us problems as he holds the midfield together, and with Adam Green in defence, we were in for a difficult time. After 17 minutes Cobham got their reward for their control of the game. Again it came down their left with No. 11 Rule playing a nice ball across the goal, with Marklew running in unopposed and passing the ball into the net.  
Epsom & Ewell 0-1 Cobham.

Cobham were now in control and on 31 minutes a nice ball was played into Marklew, and he found himself 1-on-1 with Nabbad, who had moved quickly off his line. Marklew attempted to lift the ball over the onrushing keeper and fortunately put a bit too much on it and it went over the bar too. Shortly after, we managed to put a nice move together and the ball was played to Oliveira who burst towards the box only to be brought down just outside. McVey, who normally takes the kick, stepped aside for No. 9 Robinson to have a go, but his shot hit the bottom of the wall and rebounded easily back to the keeper. On 36 minutes we gave away a free kick outside the box, which earned Nelson-Roberts a yellow card, in a similar position to our previous kick. Cobham No. 7 decided to go under the wall as well. He also managed to hit the bottom and it rolled easily back to Nabbad. Unfortunately, Sami managed to let the ball go through his hands and legs and it rolled into the goal. I don't even think it managed to hit the back of the net.

Cobham continued to create more and keep us pinned in our half and they had a couple more chances that didn't really trouble Nabbad, but a header in the box from Marklew appeared to strike an Epsom & Ewell arm. There was a big shout from Cobham players but the referee waved it away. Difficult to see from where we were standing but we went in 0-2 down.  
HT Epsom & Ewell 0-2 Cobham.

There needed to be a big talk from the management to get the players focused for the second half. 2-0 down still means we are in the game, but our performance in the first half was poor and lacked any real energy. Hopefully, we would give it a go in the second. Alas, it was not to be and despite the fact we were playing down the hill in the second half, Cobham continued to exert pressure. Again they had a couple of chances and a third goal looked on the cards rather than us getting back into the game, and on 62 minutes we gave them a third goal. Trying to play out from the back, Nabbad played the ball to Green who attempted to play the ball across goal to Aiwone. He tried to let the ball run across his body whilst facing the goal, but No. 11 Rule anticipated the move and took the ball off Aiwone and slotted the ball into an empty net.

In the meantime, Oba Akinniranye had replaced Karl Bailey and, as always, he started to cause trouble on our right; however, he managed to get himself booked after a little bit of trouble with Cobham No. 4, and both ended up in the book. Oba did manage to provide an assist for our first real shot on goal and good movement found Ryley Merritt (who had replaced Dunne in the 1st half). He had a good shot, but it went across the goal. As the keeper scrambled across it must have been close. Cobham seemed to think *we have to stop this* and on the 85th minute another move down the Cobham right had the ball played across goal and No. 14 Simpson had another easy finish at the far post.

We managed to create a couple of chances towards the end and finally their keeper had to make a save, after Oba again created problems and his shot was stopped just short of the goal. Jack Torbett, returning after another lay-off, hit the bar from a cross/shot. There was nothing really after that, and Cobham continued their march to the title.

After a great mid-week performance v Step 4 Bedfont Sports in a friendly, today's performance was disappointing and with only one shot on goal for the whole game it is probably the worst since we lost to Sutton Common Rovers. Losing to Cobham is also not the worst result either, but we need to gather ourselves for Tuesday night v Badshot Lea at Chalky Lane. KO 7.45, as some of the teams below us are putting in good results and we don't wish to be drawn into another relegation battle.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Team:

Nabbad, Oliveira, Nelson-Roberts, C. Green, Dunne, Aiwone, O'Keeffe, Murphy-McVey, Robinson, Ksaidz, Bailey — Subs: Gilfillian-Waul, Dundas, Akinniranye, Merrett, Torbett.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



## Million-pound FIFA-standard football pitch opens at Glyn School in Ewell

22 December 2025



A new state-of-the-art FIFA-standard 3G football pitch and pavilion has been officially opened at Glyn School in Ewell after more than £1 million of investment from national and local partners.

The Premier League, The FA and the Government's Football Foundation contributed just over half of the total cost, with further funding from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Your Fund Surrey (Surrey County Council) and the Epsom & Ewell Colts. The new pitch will be used by Glyn School, other GLF Schools, Epsom & Ewell Colts FC and the wider community.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Playing Pitch Strategy and Corporate Plan identified the need for high-quality sports provision to promote healthy lifestyles, widen participation and meet the needs of a growing population. With more than 1,800 students at Glyn and around 5,000 across other GLF Schools, the facilities are expected to make a significant daily impact on school and community sport.

A partnership with Epsom & Ewell Colts FC means the pitch will become a major hub for grassroots football, supporting over 1,200 players across 82 teams, including 30 girls' and women's teams. The GLF Schools Foundation will help expand access for disadvantaged groups, disabled players and young people historically underrepresented in sport, aligning with both borough and national priorities for community wellbeing.

The official opening took place on Wednesday (Dec 10), with GLF Schools Interim CEO James Nicholson addressing guests and the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, **Cllr Robert Leach**, cutting the ribbon. Also present were Liz Pill from the Football Foundation and Rosanne Fine from Surrey Football Association. Visitors toured the pitch and pavilion after watching players take to the new surface.

Jo Garrod, Headteacher at Glyn School, said: "This new pitch and pavilion are a fantastic addition to the sports facilities at our school and will be a huge benefit to all our students. We're extremely grateful to the Football Foundation for the funding and investment and delighted that they have made such a significant contribution to improve the quality of sports facilities for everyone in the community."

James Nicholson, Interim CEO of GLF Schools, said: "The range of sports and activities we offer at GLF Schools is central to the educational experience for all students. Having the latest modern facilities is key to giving every student the best opportunities to reach their full potential and enjoy their time with us. I'd like



to thank The Football Foundation, whose major grant made this development possible, Epsom & Ewell Council, Your Fund Surrey (Surrey County Council), and the Epsom & Ewell Colts, who also supported this project with substantial financial contributions. As well as Surrey FA for their strategic guidance and endorsement, and all the consultants in design, fundraising, planning, and project management who worked so hard to build such an impressive pitch and pavilion.”

Robert Sullivan, Chief Executive of the Football Foundation, said: “The Football Foundation is working closely with our partners, the Premier League, The FA and Government, to transform the quality of grassroots facilities in England by delivering projects like this across the country. Good quality playing facilities have a transformative impact on physical and mental health and play an important role in bringing people together and strengthening local communities. We’re delighted that the local community in Epsom and Ewell will now be able to enjoy all these benefits thanks to the new facilities at Glyn School.”

Epsom & Ewell MP Helen Maguire said: “The opening of this new pitch and pavilion at Glyn School is a real milestone for Ewell and the wider borough. It gives young people and local clubs a first-class space to train, play, and grow – and it strengthens the role that sport can play in building confidence and aspiration, as well as the improvements it can bring to both physical and mental health. I’m delighted to see this project completed and look forward to visiting soon.”

Many local clubs, organisations and community groups provided letters of support, including NESCOL, Chelsea FC Foundation, Fetcham United FC, Active Surrey, Surrey Schools FA, Surrey Cricket Foundation and Tidy Keepers.

A 3G (Third Generation) astro pitch is an advanced artificial turf surface combining synthetic grass, sand and rubber infill to mimic natural turf, offering all-weather durability and consistent performance.

## About the Football Foundation

The Football Foundation is the Premier League, The FA and the Government’s charity dedicated to delivering outstanding grassroots facilities. Since 2000 it has raised £1.3 billion to improve facilities nationwide, including 1,300 3G pitches, 15,000 grass pitches and 1,700 changing rooms, attracting an additional £1.5 billion in partnership funding. It works with local authorities, County FAs and community partners to create Local Football Facility Plans for every area of England. More information at [footballfoundation.org.uk](http://footballfoundation.org.uk).

## About GLF Schools

GLF Schools is a multi-academy trust of 43 schools serving more than 17,000 pupils aged 2 to 19 across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex and parts of London. The Trust includes eight secondary schools and 35 primary settings, each serving its own community while sharing a commitment to excellent educational outcomes.

Sam Jones – Reporter



New Pitch at Glyn School x 2. Credit: GLF Schools

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# Surrey author’s unexpected journey to global football goodwill

22 December 2025



If you had asked Surrey-based accidental author Stephen Johnson twenty years ago whether he would one day write a ten-book children’s series, sponsor a grassroots football kit in East London, and end up backing a trophy for “the worst team in the world” in Micronesia, he says he would have laughed. Yet life, he reflects, has a habit of surprising you.

Johnson, who has lived in the Epsom & Ewell area for many years, says the whole adventure began almost by accident, from the writing to the football involvement. His children’s picture-book series *Berry Town* did not begin with a long-held dream but with a workplace bet. “I’d been telling a colleague that anyone can achieve anything with enough persistence,” he recalls. “He challenged me to write a book. I told him books take years, so he said, ‘Fine, write a children’s book.’ Challenge accepted.”

The idea took shape around characters inspired by fruit. Years earlier, Johnson had pitched a fruit-based TV concept that was dismissed on the grounds that “kids aren’t interested in fruit”, but the idea stuck with him. When the challenge arrived, he created the Berry Town community, beginning with Mrs Straw, a character he describes as having “very Hyacinth Bucket vibes”. Illustrator David Leonard joined after Johnson scoured the internet for artists willing to take on the unusual brief with a modest budget. “David just got it,” he says. “My sketches needed rescuing, and his flat, colourful artwork brought the whole world alive.”

There were some early hiccups, including a character name that had to be changed after a reviewer pointed out an unfortunate slang meaning. “That one needed fixing straight away,” Johnson admits. “You never forget moments like that.”

Before *Berry Town* ever reached Micronesia, it first made its mark in East London. In 2009, Johnson sponsored a full kit for Senrab FC, a grassroots club renowned for producing future Premier League players. The shirts featured bespoke artwork of two *Berry Town* characters, the Boysen Twins. “I was doing well at the time and wanted to give back,” he says. “Helping kids felt right.” Many of the young players still remember “the Berry Town kit”, and several were given copies of the books — one child telling him it was the first book they had ever owned. “If you can support kids in football and in reading, you do it,” Johnson says.

But the most surprising chapter unfolded 7,000 miles away in Pohnpei, Micronesia. Johnson came across an article about two British men, Paul Watson and Matt Conrad, who travelled there to coach what was widely considered the worst football team in the world. “I loved their ambition,” he says. “I contacted them and asked if I could help.”

He ended up sponsoring the Berry Town Cup — awarded to the runners-up of the Pohnpei Premier League. The main trophy had already been sponsored, so he took the next one available. Only later did he realise the league was often improvised, with teams struggling to assemble due to travel costs. “But none of that mattered. I just wanted to help,” he says. He also sent copies of the books to local schools, where they became unexpected resources for children learning English.

More than a decade later, Johnson rediscovered the original artwork, drafts, and even the formal sponsorship certificate tucked away on an old computer. “It was labelled ‘Old Projects, Berry Town’,” he says. “I opened it all up and smiled. I’d forgotten how much heart went into it.” Sharing the story with his football-mad 13-year-old son brought new joy. “He loved it,” Johnson says. “He started researching Pohnpei, asking questions. It became this lovely bonding moment.”

Although Johnson believes *Berry Town* “has had its time”, he is considering releasing the books digitally, probably for free. “Why not let the world enjoy them?” he says.

What began as a playful dare became a decade-spanning adventure involving creativity, kindness, international football, and a legacy that travelled far further than its author could ever have imagined.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Photo: International FC, being awarded the Berry-Town.com Pohnpei Premier League Runners-Up Cup

## Epsom and Ewell FC's narrow defeat

22 December 2025



**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





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

22 December 2025



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**

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



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

22 December 2025



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

22 December 2025



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



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## Banned fan cheers on Epsom and Ewell FC from tree

22 December 2025



A lifelong supporter of Epsom & Ewell Football Club has taken to watching matches from a nearby tree after receiving what he describes as an "unwarranted" lifetime ban from the club's ground.

Richard Lambert, 58, has followed the ninth-tier side for nearly 44 years. The ban was imposed in January following a long-running series of disputes with the club's committee.

Mr Lambert told the BBC he believes the suspension was triggered after he altered the name of his personal X (formerly Twitter) account to appear as if it were the club's official account. He has been a frequent critic of the club's management on social media and on his personal website, with some posts directed at individual committee members.

Since April, the BBC says it has approached Epsom & Ewell three times for details about the ban. The club has declined to discuss the matter beyond stating: "We have had a number of issues with this supporter over the years. We do not want to discuss this any further. The matter has been dealt with."

A letter from the club to Mr Lambert, seen by the BBC, cites only a breach of a previous agreement over use of social media. It referred to an "indefinite" ban, but the club has since told the BBC it is now for life. Mr Lambert says he has not been officially informed of this change.

Mr Lambert, who first attended a match as a 15-year-old in 1981, has served as the club's historian for two decades, producing statistical archives and match reports. "All I want to do is see my team play," he said, "but I also want to see the culture at our club change towards valuing its supporters."

Lifetime bans from football stadiums are rare and generally imposed only for serious offences or criminal acts, which is not alleged in this case. Clubs, however, are entitled to refuse entry to anyone without giving a reason.

The Football Supporters' Association told the BBC it had attempted to mediate between Mr Lambert and the club but received no response from the club's committee. "At non-league level, fans are the lifeblood of the game," said the FSA's Garreth Cummins. "In a situation like this, we don't see that either side is winning."

Mr Lambert initially watched games from outside the perimeter fence but says that after the club stationed security to move him on, he began climbing a tree for a better view. He ended last season 30ft up overlooking King George's Field in Surbiton. This season, the Salts have returned to Leg O'Mutton Field in Cobham, sharing with Cobham FC, and Mr Lambert has found a lower tree with a full view of the pitch.

Founded in 1918 as Epsom Juniors, Epsom & Ewell's greatest moment came in 1975 when they reached the inaugural FA Vase final at Wembley, losing 2-1 to Hoddesdon Town. Last season they lifted the Southern Combination Challenge Cup, defeating Abbey Rangers 1-0 in the final. The Salts averaged around 90 spectators at home league matches in 2024-25.

“If the ban stays in place for life,” Mr Lambert told the BBC, “then I’ll be climbing this tree for the rest of my life – or at least for as long as I’m physically able to.”  
Richard Lambert sitting in a tree looking on to the pitch where Epsom & Ewell play, with his back to the camera and the pitch in the background

# Why Does No One Care About Epsom & Ewell Football Club?

22 December 2025



**By most measures, Epsom & Ewell Football Club should be one of the borough’s proudest institutions.** Founded in 1918, steeped in history, and once a beacon of non-league ambition, it’s a club that has worn its local colours with pride for over a century. And yet, in 2024, it plays its home matches outside the borough, in front of modest crowds, with little official support, and almost no recognition from those it nominally represents. How did it come to this?

## From Wembley to Nowhere

The club’s golden era came in the mid-1970s. Under manager Bob Smith, Epsom & Ewell reached the FA Vase final at Wembley in 1975, taking more than 10,000 fans to the twin towers. They lost narrowly to Hoddesdon Town, but the day cemented their status in the non-league elite. Just two years later, they were crowned Athenian League champions, playing stylish football and regularly attracting crowds of several hundred to West Street Ground in Ewell.

That ground, tucked between residential streets, was a symbol of grassroots football. A modest stand, small clubhouse, and rickety fence ringed the pitch — but it was home. Children ran the lines as ball boys, pensioners leaned on the barrier rails, and on Saturday afternoons, you could hear the cheers echo down Ewell High Street.

All that changed in 1993. Pressured by rising costs and development interest, the club sold the West Street Ground, and with it, lost its physical and emotional anchor in the borough. The land was sold for housing. Since then, Epsom & Ewell FC has led a nomadic existence, groundsharing with clubs like Banstead Athletic, Merstham, Leatherhead, Chipstead, and currently Corinthian-Casuals in Tolworth — nearly six miles from the borough boundary.

## A Club Without a Borough

It is now 31 years since Epsom & Ewell FC played a competitive fixture in Epsom or Ewell. An entire generation has grown up without ever seeing their town represented in senior men’s football. Few children wear the club’s blue and gold; few adults even realise it still exists.

What happened? And more to the point — where was the borough council?

In the three decades since losing West Street, the club has repeatedly tried to secure land for a new stadium within the borough. Sites have been proposed, explored, and rejected. Discussions about Long Grove, Court Recreation Ground, and even sharing facilities with local colleges have all ended in failure. Most recently, informal talks about part of the Horton area being earmarked for community sports development went nowhere.

Supporters point to the contrasting support other councils give their clubs. Sutton United, for instance, receives backing from Sutton Council, which helped secure funding for facilities upgrades when the club was promoted to the Football League. In Epsom, the silence has been deafening. There has been no public plan, no council-led consultation, no transparent effort to bring the borough’s only senior football club back home.

## Struggling for Survival

The club is currently playing in the Combined Counties League Division One — the 10th tier of English football. It exists thanks to a dedicated band of volunteers, a threadbare budget, and the goodwill of its landlords. Crowds rarely exceed 60–70. With no clubhouse revenue, limited sponsorship, and minimal visibility, it’s little wonder the club’s financial situation is precarious.

In 2019, the club formally became a Community Interest Company (CIC), a status intended to attract grants and funding by aligning with social benefit goals. While that has helped underpin youth development and safeguarding policies, it hasn’t solved the central issue: without a home, the club cannot grow.

Even now, Epsom & Ewell FC runs youth teams, junior girls’ sessions, and has engaged in local community coaching schemes. But ask any parent at those sessions where the senior men’s team plays, and many will shrug.

## The Missed Potential

What’s so frustrating is how easily this could be different. Epsom is one of the largest towns in the South East without a senior football club playing within its boundaries. The borough’s population is over 80,000, and youth football is thriving — the likes of Epsom Eagles and Ewell Saxons run dozens of sides from U7s to U18s. Local talent is not in short supply. But with no flagship club, no clear pathway, and no local stadium to rally around, that energy is scattered.

The irony is that other non-league clubs across Surrey have built strong community models with much less historical pedigree. Why not Epsom?

Councillors have, over the years, said that land availability, planning complexity, and infrastructure costs make a return difficult. That may be true — but where is the political will? Where is the long-term strategic thinking about using sport to promote community health, pride, and youth engagement?

With millions spent on new housing, green infrastructure, and civic regeneration, a modest community stadium with a few hundred seats, changing rooms, and floodlights should not be an insurmountable dream. Yet for 30 years, it has been exactly that.

## Do You Care?

This brings us to the title question: *Why does no one care about Epsom & Ewell FC?*

Maybe it’s because we’ve forgotten how important sport can be to a town’s identity. Maybe because the club’s quiet survival hasn’t shouted loudly enough. Or maybe we just assumed someone else would fix it.

But the truth is, without meaningful public interest — and without council support — Epsom & Ewell FC will remain a ghost club. It will still play fixtures in Tolworth or elsewhere, cheered on by a few die-hards who remember the old days, while the borough it bears in its name carries on, unaware.

It doesn’t have to be this way.

A Special Correspondent

Image – an imagined modest stadium that could be Epsom and Ewell FC’s.