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Derby disrupter doesn't quite go down

Ben Newman ran onto the Epsom racecourse seconds after the starter gates opened on the 3rd June 2023 Derby flat-race. Though the horses were still out of sight by the time several security and police officers dragged him off in front of the Grandstand, his act was prosecuted as a public nuisance.

Appearing in custody before Recorder David Ockelton at Guildford Crown Court he was sentenced today (6th July).

The court heard from Wendy Cottee prosecuting that it was only the swift action of security and police that ensured the race itself proceeded undisturbed. Nevertheless, it was clear from video and audio footage that many members of the public were "seriously annoyed". She also told the court that Newman had sent an appeal on social media calling for a large number of sympathisers of "Animals Rising" to join him in his protest. An appeal the Judge commented had not been successful.

Defending Mr Nick Goss said that Newman was passionate and well intentioned. He did not intend to create danger but only to protest. His time in custody since 3rd June had been a "salutary lesson" and caused him to reflect on his actions.

Newman has been arrested over the last year in connection with various sporting events and was on bail with a condition not to attend public sporting events on 3rd June. Mr Goss stated that none of these investigations had led to any criminal charges.

The Judge said to Newman "The proud liberties of our constitution have limits – you went beyond those limits. There was a clear danger to police and security. You could not predict how long it would take them to remove you."

"The offence is serious with a maximum of 10 years. However, I will make the sentence as short as possible. It will be 18 weeks and it will be suspended for 2 years."

The court ordered Newman to undertake 80 hours community service and to pay costs of £1800 and a victim surcharge of £126.

Residents' complaints about anti-protester measures ahead of Derby

Epsom Derby organisers faced an "awful lot of complaints" from residents as they put up fencing and closed footpaths to minimise disruption caused by Animal Rising protesters. The activists had made clear before the event they planned to disrupt this year's Derby, and one did make it to the track.

The Jockey Club, which owns **Epsom racecourse** among others, applied for an injunction ahead of the event on Saturday, June 3.

It also asked a special meeting of the **Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators**, held behind closed doors just days before the event, for permission to put up 4,000 metres of fencing across the Downs and suspend footpaths.

Simon Durrant, representing the Jockey Club at a meeting of the Conservators held on Monday (June 19), spoke of his "disappointment" at the fencing having to go up and that organisers were "constantly fearing the worst". But he said due to the "unique" nature of the Epsom Downs, organisers quickly realised "it wasn't about avoidance it was about how we were going to react to it".

Mr Durrant set out the challenges ahead of this year's event and addressed "frustrations" residents may have had. Adding that he knew there would be councillors at the meeting who had heard from residents about their "frustrations and disappointment" he called it a "different and difficult" event this year.

He said: "It was made even more difficult because, for obvious reasons, we didn't want to communicate why we were putting fencing up, why we were suspending the footpaths. We didn't want to give the protesters too much information before that Saturday morning. We've had comments in from residents as well."

He told the meeting that the Jockey Club had seen what the protesters were capable of when they disrupted the Grand National at Aintree in April. He said there were three types of protesters, the "really pleasant" peaceful protesters outside the grounds, those "intent on causing a scene in and around the racecourse" and then those who were trying to gain access to the racetrack.

Councillor Bernice Froud (Residents' Association, Woodcote and Langley Vale) thanked Mr Durrant for the explanation of the

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security issues. She said: "I did have an awful lot of complaints where I think people just didn't quite understand what was happening. I fully understand that none of us in this room that knew about it could really publicise that. So I think it's really helpful that you've actually explained in detail what the reasoning was, and I hope that goes some way to actually reassuring the residents."

At the meeting it was also confirmed that no working royals attended the Derby, and that as the late Queen Elizabeth II used to attend in a private capacity, it was not something that was "naturally be passed along" through the family.

Mr Durrant pointed to other complications across the weekend, including train strikes, and the FA Cup final between Manchester United and Manchester City that was played at Wembley on the same day.

He told the meeting: "Two Manchester clubs, playing in London. It was great for the Manchester United fans because most of them live in London."

With an event that he said gets "better and better every year", Mr Durrant said of the Derby weekend: "As ever, in general, a fantastic, iconic event that puts Epsom on the map again."

Image: Preparations for the Queen\'s Jubilee celebrations underway on the Hill seen from the Epsom Downs Racecourse, Credit: LDR Emily Coady-Stemp

Should have gone to the Surrey Youth Games?

On Saturday, children in **Epsom & Ewell** who took part in the 2023 **Specsavers** Surrey Youth Games and their families came together to celebrate the Games at the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford. Around 70 children from Epsom & Ewell aged 7-16 took part in the Games this year, having a go at a fun across a range of activities – from boccia, boxing and street basketball to judo and rugby, all at no charge.

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is the biggest multi-sport youth programme of its kind in the south east. The Games were open to all but were actively promoted to encourage those who might not normally get the chance to join a sports club or are otherwise inactive.

The Games would not have been possible without the 12 young ambassadors who helped promote them in their schools, encouraging young people to find out more and sign up to take part.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee said "We were overjoyed to see so many children from Epsom & Ewell take part in the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games this year.

"We know that building positive habits in early life is vital for the long-term health of our children and the Games are a great way for children who may not previously have had access to some of these sports to join in and have fun taking part.

I was honoured to meet the young ambassadors who volunteered their time to help promote the Games to their peers earlier in the year while I was serving as Mayor of Epsom & Ewell and was delighted to see the positive outcome of their efforts this weekend."

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games were coordinated by Active Surrey and sponsored by Specsavers.

Anyone for tennis? If you pay.

Plans to introduce fees to **Epsom and Ewell Borough**'s currently free of charge tennis courts are underway, after several proposals were agreed upon by councillors at a meeting of the **Environment Committee** on Tuesday (13th June 2023). The plans will rely on the approval of a £20,000 grant from the **Lawn Tennis Association** (LTA) to cover the cost of a new gating and booking system.

The proposed fees start at £6 per court per hour with a maximum 5 people £40 household annual subscription available allowing for free bookings of up to 2 hours days. A 50% discount on the subscription is proposed for those in receipt of low-income benefits. Proposals would see the courts bookable three days in advance for those wishing to pay for a single session and up to seven days in advance for subscribers.

Proposed tennis court hourly costs: Ad hoc cost all courts £6.00. Additional cost for floodlit courts £6.00. Annual household



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subscription costs £40.00 and £20 for those in receipt of low- income benefits.

Income generated from the booking fees would be set aside solely for court maintenance, in line with recommendations agreed upon by the Committee.

Professional coaches will be required to book specific coaching slots and be prohibited from using regular ad-hoc or subscription booking services.

The report put forward to the Committee said that: "The agreement will ensure that court availability for casual play is protected, the core purpose of the parks. This will include restricting the coaching providers to a defined total number of hours to deliver the programme and ensuring that there is always a certain number of courts available for casual play."

Coaches will also be required to provide a one-hour free community coaching session each week as part of their booking agreement.

If the LTA grant is approved, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council would be required to pay a £2,380 annual subscription for a 5-year period to cover the cost of servicing and maintaining the gates and online booking system.

The LTA has estimated the uptake annual subscriptions in the borough to be £1400 with annual income generated from the courts estimated at £27.107.

The Council currently provides and maintains 12 public tennis courts across the borough at 5 sites which are currently available free of charge to recreational players.

☐ Alexandra Recreation Ground, Alexandra Road (three courts)
☐ Court Recreation Ground, off Pound Lane (three courts)
☐ Poole Road Recreation Ground, Poole Road (two courts)
☐ Gibraltar Recreation Ground, West Street (two courts)
☐ Auriol Park, Salisbury Road (two courts)

The report put forward to the Committee describes the current lack of service charge as a "missed opportunity for income generation."

It also expresses concern for a delay in action stating that: "if we don't pursue this opportunity the funding pot available will be depleted and an opportunity to implement the gate system to help the sustainability of our tennis courts will be missed."

The date for implementation of the new gates and booking system is currently estimated for September 2023.

Image: kance CC BY 2.0

Police maintain order at Epsom Derby Festival

Surrey Police successfully carried out one of its biggest policing operations at the **Epsom Derby** Festival at the weekend (2 and 3 June).

The event, which took place at Epsom Downs Racecourse, began with Ladies Day on Friday, 2 June, followed by the Derby Day on Saturday, 3 June. The two-day event saw tens of thousands of attendees across the two days, as well as millions of spectators watching from around the globe.

Officers and staff from Surrey Police and Sussex Police were involved in the large-scale operation, with planning having taken place throughout the year to ensure that we were able to help keep the public safe.

Specialist teams worked to support officers on the ground, including firearms, intelligence and drone operators.

A total of 39 arrests were made over the course of the two days. Thirty-one of these arrests were made in connection with planned criminal activity at the Epsom Derby Festival, including two women who were quickly detained moments before they were able to get onto the track. Thirty have since been released on bail pending further enquiries.

Ben Newman, 32, of Homerton High Street in Hackney, has been charged with causing public nuisance. He has been remanded and is due to appear at Guildford Magistrates' Court tomorrow (Monday, 5 June).

Chief Superintendent Clive Davies, who was in charge of the policing operation for the Epsom Derby, said: "Each year we look forward to keeping the public safe at one of Surrey's biggest events. In our 24th year of policing the Epsom Derby, we are pleased



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to say we were able to do just that.

"I am incredibly proud of every single officer, staff member and volunteer who worked in the run-up to the event and at the event itself. They played a vital role in protecting the public and preventing and responding to criminality.

"We absolutely support people's rights to peacefully protest, but we differentiate between this and unacceptable criminal behaviour.

"We were one of a number of organisations involved in planning and implementation of this multi-agency operation, and I would like to thank the event organisers and our partner agencies for their support and commitment to delivering a safe event."

(Surrey Police press release ends)

The BBC reported:

"A man was seen being bundled to the floor by police and security guards during the opening seconds of the prestigious race. He was quickly removed from the course while being jeered by spectators. The race was unaffected.

The protest went ahead despite the **Jockey Club**, which runs the event, being granted a court injunction prohibiting the group **Animal Rising** from disrupting it. The group had publicly threatened to stop the main race going ahead, saying it wanted to raise awareness about animal rights.

Mr Newman was one of 31 people arrested in connection with the planned protests, including 12 on the racecourse grounds and 19 during a pre-emptive operation in the hours before it began.

Surrey Police said two women were arrested after being "quickly detained moments before they were able to get on to the track".

Mr Newman is the only protester to face a charge so far. The remaining 30 people have been released on bail pending further inquiries, police said."

A Derby story for Epsom's famous races

No racing follower of the **Epsom Derby** forgets **Mill Reef**. What he achieved on the racecourse was extraordinary but there was something else about Paul Mellon's champion, the way he was, that grew his following.

Julian Wilson, the BBC TV's long-time presenter, not an obvious romantic, wrote that "to know him was to love him," which is what his trainer Ian Balding and groom John Hallum did.

Mellon bred Mill Reef at his Rokeby Farm in Virginia and named him after an exclusive club next to his winter home in Antigua. A committed Anglophile, the inheritor of a banking fortune and one of the richest men in America, Mellon chose to send Mill Reef to Balding's Kingsclere yard, near Newbury.

The new arrival was on the small side but neat, compact perfection, with a strikingly easy, athletic action and an endearing temperament. It did not take long for those close to Mill Reef to be in awe of him. For the two-year-old's first piece of work, in February 1970, Balding told Hallum to lead his group of four colts and then go a half-stride faster. When Mill Reef drew effortlessly clear of his hard pressed companions, Balding assumed that Hallum had gone too fast and told him his instructions were to just canter. "Guv'nor, I was only cantering."

Another piece of work before Mill Reef's debut at Salisbury in May produced another astonishing display. Yet impressive work at home is not always repeated on the racecourse; it was by Mill Reef. At Salisbury he brushed aside Fireside Chat, the 9-2 on favourite, who had recently won impressively at Newmarket. Mill Reef then won the Coventry Stakes at Royal Ascot by eight lengths. Uneasy about running him in the Gimcrack Stakes at York on heavy ground, Balding was persuaded by Mellon to run, and Mill Reef sauntered to a 10 length victory.

He rounded off his juvenile season by winning the Dewhurst Stakes impressively, by four lengths. Those were not ordinary victories. Mill Reef, readily identifiable in Mellon's familiar black colours with a gold cross, and wearing a sheepskin noseband, made mincemeat (see curiosity 2) of his rivals and merited adoration from his fans.

Balding believed that Mill Reef was "an out-and-out two-year-old performer," rather than one likely to flourish as he matured. There were plenty of examples of top class two-year-olds overtaken by less precocious horses but Mill Reef was a regular surprise.



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The 1971 2000 Guineas was billed as a duel between the good little one – Mill Reef – and the good big one, the unbeaten My Swallow, who had narrowly bettered Mill Reef in the previous year's Prix Robert Papin. At Newmarket, both were beaten by Brigadier Gerard. My Swallow had a disappointing season but Mill Reef and Brigadier Gerard proved themselves outstanding champions. While Brigadier Gerard was dominant at up to 10 furlongs, Mill Reef dismissed doubts about his stamina by sweeping up the Derby, Eclipse Stakes, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

As Balding observed, "Horses that win races like he did as two-yearolds don't go on to be one and a half mile horses, and win the Derby. That was the phenomenon. The further he went, the faster he went. It was quite extraordinary." Mill Reef started 1972 by strolling away with the Prix Ganay but then struggled to beat Homeric in the Coronation Cup, after which he succumbed to a virus. After a number of minor setbacks Mill Reef started his preparation for the Arc when, on 30 August, disaster struck.

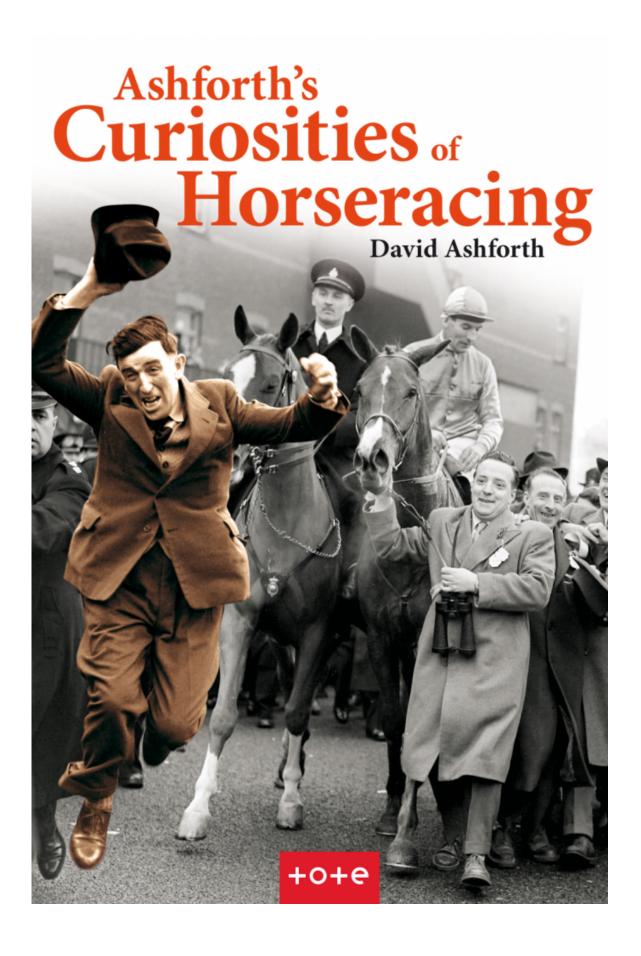
In Balding's autobiography, Making The Running: A Racing Life (2004), he recalled the sad episode and its aftermath. As Mill Reef came to the end of a fine piece of work, he was suddenly to be seen standing on three legs, with Hallum beside him. When Balding reached them, Hallum said, "Guv'nor, I am sure he has broken his leg – I heard a terrible crack."

It got worse. When vet Barry Williams examined the near fore leg, he told Balding, "It feels like a bag of marbles." Mellon, a likeable, modest and thoughtful man, according to Balding "the best owner any trainer could ever have," reacted to the news by asking how Hallam was. A room at Balding's yard was converted into an operating theatre and Jim Roberts, assisted by Tony Ward, carried out a seven hour operation. Mill Reef's afflicted leg was put in a full length plaster cast, with iron splints made by farrier Tom Reilly. Fortunately, Mill Reef was an amenable patient.

The room would be his residence for several months, adorned by cards from well wishers, until he was eventually moved to the National Stud. There Mill Reef became an outstanding stallion, his offspring including Derby winners Shirley Heights (1978) and Reference Point (1987). Mill Reef, a Derby winner himself in 1971, ridden by G. Lewis, died in 1986, aged 17.

David Ashworth

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About the Author:

If you enjoyed this extract, his latest book, **Ashforth's Curiosity of Horseracing** looks at the people, events, horses, trainers, owners and jockeys that shaped the Sport of Kings. Twice voted Horserace Writer of the Year, he worked for The Sporting Life and Racing Post and, in the USA, was a columnist for the Racing Times and Daily Racing Form.

Ashforth's Curiosity of Horseracing (Merlin Unwin Books) hardback £20 available online or from your local bookshop.

"Long-live" the Salts. Crowned with promotion.

Epsom & Ewell FC 2-1 Wick FC. Southern Combination League - Division One Playoff Final. Saturday 6th May 2023.

Thirty years to the day after our final first team match at West Street, we made our final bow at Fetcham Grove but in much happier circumstances, as our 2-1 win over Wick ensured us of promotion back to Step Five for the first time since the dark days of our Centenary relegation season of 2017/18.

The pressure was on. Our second place finish and subsequent home advantage for the playoffs had made us favourites and we had come through a nervy encounter against Selsey just seven days previously. How would we fare against Wick? Well, it was never going to be a comfortable afternoon for an Epsom supporter (but then, did anyone expect any different!) and the match will only live long in the memory for three things. 1) Two wonderful strikes from Jaevon Dyer. 2) A horrible challenge on Dyer in the closing seconds. 3) The significance of what has been achieved with this result, with a return to the Combined Counties League appearing nailed on and the challenges that will bring, including another trip to face Jersey Bulls.

Of course playoff finals are rarely of high quality; they are all about the occasion and the performance means nothing whatsoever without the result, so our players deserve a lot of credit. After being hauled back to 1-1 and with momentum appearing to be slipping away, they turned the contest around and finished worthy winners in the end.

An attendance of 384; our largest at home since our final League match at West Street in April 1993 when Aldershot Town supplied a large number of the 1,087 present that day, gathered in the pouring rain to see whether we could clinch promotion. The visitors brought a group of people with them who certainly contributed to the atmosphere at the Leisure Centre end of the ground, and how Wick must wish that they followed them on a regular basis!

We took the field with just two changes from our win against Selsey with Kevin Moreno-Gomez coming in for Johnny "Sonic" Akoto and Lewis Pearch starting ahead of Jamie Byatt. The opening exchanges were fairly tame as both clubs settled into the occasion, with the Wick drummer setting a beat for the match which started to take on a carnival atmosphere as the rain began to relent.

The first chance of the match came our way in the 11th minute after a clever pass inside the defender to Pearch who bore down on goal, only to be denied by a fantastic save from Keelan Belcher who just got a leg to the low shot, diverting the ball a couple of feet wide of the goal. Belcher was then required to punch the ball away under pressure from Dylan Merchant seconds later, but the next real action came just after the twenty minute mark with a snap shot from Dave Crouch that Tom Theobald dealt with fairly comfortably.

The game was meandering a little if I'm honest until it all changed in the 31st minute when Athan Smith-Joseph got down the left wing. His cross went beyond everyone but was collected by Dyer, almost out on the touchline and he beat two men, before cutting onto his right foot and drilling the ball, via a faint deflection, low past Belcher at his near post. It was a superb strike and on a wet day, the ball skidded through at quite a pace before nestling in the net and justifying in one instant why I love standing behind the goal we attack, even if it was difficult to hear yourself speak at times, something that doesn't often happen at Epsom games!

Smith-Joseph tried his luck five minutes later with Gideon Acheampong, making his 100th appearance for the Salts, providing a great overlap, but the shot was weak and wide. The game then seemed to take on a strange pattern with our boys unsure of whether to push forward for a second goal, and Wick then began to hold a greater share of the possession for a while, although were rarely threatening with it until the final seconds of the half when Theobald palmed away a stinging drive from distance from Sam Connolly.

The rain started again as the players came out for the second half, but the pattern of passiveness continued. We didn't seem to know whether to stick or twist although Moreno-Gomez was notably getting forward more and his perfect centre was missed completely by the incoming Pearch just six yards out just five minutes into the second period! Theobald was out to clear a long ball shortly afterwards but as the half progressed, we seemed happy enough to allow the visitors to retain the ball more; a tactic



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that is obviously not without risk. Additionally, Acheampong began to see more and more of the ball on his side, but without any help as two players often appeared on his flank and from one of these attacks, we had a close escape when a deep cross was headed over at the far post.

Our Manager Matt Chapman clearly noticed this development and we made a substitution with the ageless Byatt coming on for Smith-Joseph and Pearch moving out to the right, presumably to help out on that flank where required, but before the new plan had really settled in the visitors were level as a harmless looking ball in from the Wick left wasn't claimed by anyone and Theobald had to come out for the ball and was adjudged to have clipped Aaron Tester in the penalty area. It certainly looked like a penalty to me, but people nearer the incident weren't convinced. Either way though Connolly stepped up and clinically beat Theobald from the spot in the 66th minute. It's hard to pin any blame onto any one individual here, especially from eighty yards away, so it's probably best to describe this one as a defensive miscommunication!

Of course, it is easy to make light of it now, but at the time, this was a concerning development. We had surrendered any momentum we had built up and would effectively have to go out and win the match once again. Dyer was a constant thorn in their sides though and was clumsily brought down on the edge of the area, but out wide, from where Gavin Quintyne's free kick went straight through the wall and struck the inside of Belcher's right hand post, flying across the six yard box and away. Dyer was continuing to receive some rough treatment and found himself on the deck in the area a few minutes later, but fortunately was able to continue after treatment.

Byatt then struck at Belcher from twenty yards as we began our push for the finish line before the key moment of our season occurred in the 82nd minute. For anyone who had missed the first goal, Dyer kindly produced a carbon copy for his second, collecting the ball out on the left wing, beating two men once again and then cutting onto his right foot before drilling the ball in at the near post. Belcher got a glove to the ball, but to be fair the shot was much too powerful and accurate and we were ahead again, this time to stay.

It was all down to game management now and we saw out the final minutes without any defensive worries, although there was still time for controversy as we caught Wick on the break and Dyer nicked the ball past Marshall Ball, only to find himself the victim of an assault on the touchline with a horrible knee high lunge. Fortunately for Dyer he saw it coming and wasn't bearing any weight at the time of the challenge, or it could have been really serious and I am happy to report that he is fine now. The referee had the red card out within seconds as our players then converged on the scene and the obligatory scuffles followed, during which Nick Wilson received a red card. Both will now receive a three game suspension at the start of the next season, but it does seem harsh that Wilson will receive the same punishment as Ball, because it was a horrible foul; a dark red card, if there was such a thing.

Fortunately, the final couple of minutes were played out without further incident and after nearly six minutes of injury time the final whistle confirmed our success. The players gathered together and blue flares were set off by the players on the pitch as the celebrations began. It was quite a sight!

It's been a tumultuous season with numerous changes to the Management and the squad for a number of reasons, some of which were unnecessary. However, the players pulled us through and Dyer in particular will deserve his own chapter in our club's history as we now get a chance to establish ourselves back at Step Five once again, which was extremely pivotal, maybe even to our entire existence as a club. The promotion means that we will now be entered back into the FA Cup and the Senior County Cup and will hopefully herald the start of brighter times. Many issues remain at our club, but these are all for another day.

Maybe the final word should go to our defender Steve Springett, who has suffered a broken ankle, a broken nose, a badly dislocated thumb and various other injury concerns over his two seasons here, and described this season as "unfinished business" after falling in the playoffs last season. Now at least he can say it is mission accomplished! Well done chaps!

Epsom & Ewell: Tom Theobald, Gideon Acheampong, Kevin Moreno-Gomez, Nick Wilson, Steve Springett, Dylan Merchant, Jaevon Dyer, Gavin Quintyne, Lewis Pearch, Jaan Stanley, Athan Smith-Joseph

Subs: Jamie Byatt for Pearch (64), Rory Edwards for Pearch (84), Thompson Adeyemi for Stanley (84)

Article here about the 30 years since Epsom and Ewell played at the West Street ground.

Playoff penalty points presage Premier promotion?

Epsom and Ewell win 6-5 on penalties. Southern Combination League - Division One Playoff Semi-Final. Saturday 29th April 2023.



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Two good saves from Tom Theobald added to some well struck penalties were enough for us to edge past Selsey and into a home playoff final against Wick next Saturday after a goalless ninety minutes at Fetcham Grove was followed by the lottery of a penalty shootout.

On a sunny and thankfully dry day a crowd of just over 200, our largest for many years were present and it was good to see a large contingent of former Epsom players watching the match. Of the ones I saw, from the 80s we had Mark Norman, the 90s Paul Meredith and Jimmy Dack, while from more recent seasons we had Daryl Cooper-Smith and Rob Hendry along with Dale Hanson-Byatt, Louis Chin and Jerry Antwi. In addition both of our former Managers from earlier in the season Anthony Jupp and Liam Giles were also present. We almost had more players on the sideline than we had on the pitch!

It's only fair to say that it was a very nervous and underwhelming contest at times. The match seemed to follow a regular pattern for much of the game with our boys holding most of the possession but failing to really threaten Syd Davies in the visitors goal. Selsey attacked from time to time, but not with the same frequency and the decision to give Johnny "Sonic" Akoto the job of marking their danger man Shane Brazil out of the game was the main reason the visitors carried so little threat, switching over with Gideon Acheampong whenever he switched wings. In fact, he's probably still marking him now!

As with most weeks we rotated the squad once again; at the back Sonic and Dylan Merchant came in for Lewis Pearch and Alex Penfold, both of whom dropped to the bench. Nick Wilson came in for Rory Edwards, while Jaevon Dyer also returned to the starting eleven at the expense of George Owusu and Jaan Stanley also started ahead of Thompson Adeyemi. It was a strong looking line-up, but it was also a strong looking bench too and they would be needed as the match went on.

We started brightly with Stanley putting Athan Smith-Joseph through in the seventh minute, but his attempt to score against the same opponents for the fifth successive game was well blocked for a corner. Next to try was Jamie Byatt whose shot was also deflected wide. We won a lot of corners in this match, but we were lacking a bit of height in the penalty area and we very rarely looked like having success from the set pieces against a well-marshalled Selsey defence. In fact we only really had one opportunity when Stanley met a Steve Springett corner with a downwards header that was cleared by a defender standing on the goal line right by the post.

Both Smith-Joseph and Dyer were asking a lot of questions of the visiting full backs, but there was very little in the way of real service for Byatt to take advantage of. To be fair though, we were looking equally solid ourselves and when Akoto broke down the left wing Brazil brought him down, earning the first yellow card of the match, although we would eventually see two issued to each side.

Just after the half hour a lovely crossfield ball was taken in stride by Smith-Joseph, although his attempt to nick the ball over Davies was blocked out for a corner and the closest we came in the half was when Akoto's deep cross caught everyone out and bounced out for a goal kick off the Selsey crossbar.

The pattern of the first half continued into the second and Dyer sent a header over the bar before Smith-Joseph sent a shot goalwards for Davies to gather. But these were only half-chances really. In the 65th minute we had our first really good opening after Stanley broke down the left and put in a superb cross. Davies had anticipated this and came out of goal to cut out the cross, but it was so good that he was out of the picture, although the incoming Dyer then missed his kick from eight yards with the goal gaping!

Selsey sent a reminder that they were still in this match with a low shot from Rocco Gamblin that went into our side netting, but at this stage it was becoming a question of whether we would score or would have to go to penalties. With just two minutes of normal time we should have rendered penalties redundant as substitute Lewis Pearch beat a man on the right wing before running at goal and pulling the ball back nicely for Smith-Joseph, but he too then missed his kick from just ten yards out! Five minutes of additional time couldn't separate the teams and so we went straight to penalties.

This was our eleventh shoot out in club history (with just four wins from the previous ten) although it was our first since the Covid affected season of 2020/21 when we had two in three days. This one was to be held at the Leisure Centre end, which caused people a little surprise and led to a number of us having to get to the other end of the ground in rapid time! We went first in the shootout, but it looked like that advantage wouldn't count for much as Rory Edwards' kick was saved comfortably by Davies. Fortunately, Dillon North also produced an average penalty and Theobald went to his left and kept it out.

Stanley was the second man up and if I'm honest, his spot kick wasn't the greatest either. Davies went down to his right to save, which he did, sending the ball flying up into the air. However, it hadn't finished yet and it came down and spun over the goal line just out of reach of the frustrated keeper! We took full advantage of this piece of fortune and wouldn't let that lead slip. Superb penalties from Gavin Quintyne, who had an excellent game, Kevin Moreno Gomez and Wilson meant that we had scored four of our first five. However, Selsey also scored all of their remaining penalties so we were locked at 4-4 and went to sudden death. At number six Dyer stepped up as the only member of the sixteen players on show to have scored a penalty for us this season and his



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strike was unstoppable, although this was then answered equally emphatically by Dale Hayes.

Captain Acheampong stepped up to put us 6-5 ahead with a solid penalty, leaving the pressure all on James Henton to follow suit, and in truth his wasn't a bad penalty, straight down the middle, Theobald originally went to his left but reacted brilliantly to stick out a right leg, diverting the ball up onto the bar and away. We were through to the Playoff Final!

In summary, over the course of the match we were the better side and we deserved the win, even if it had to go to penalties before we could achieve it! Our final opponents this season will be Wick, who, like Selsey were beaten twice by us in the regular season and were on the end of a 6-1 hiding at Fetcham Grove back in September. Something tells me this next encounter will be a little closer!

So on Saturday 6th May we will say farewell to Fetcham Grove and hopefully also to Step Six football after five seasons at this level. I know some important chap is getting a crown put on his head the same day and good luck to him, but seriously, where would you rather be next weekend, the Abbey or the Grove?

Epsom & Ewell: Tom Theobald, Gideon Acheampong, Johnny "Sonic" Akoto, Nick Wilson, Steve Springett, Dylan Merchant, Jaevon Dyer, Gavin Quintyne, Jamie Byatt, Jaan Stanley, Athan Smith-Joseph

Subs: Lewis Pearch for Byatt (68), Kevin Moreno-Gomez for Akoto (79), Alex Penfold for Springett (80), Rory Edwards for Penfold (86)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Harriers Polish Medals

Epsom & Ewell Harriers older runners are back in the UK having picked up medals at the world indoor athletics championships in Torun Poland.

Lisa Boland W40 (40-44) competed in the 60m and the 200m. Her 60m race saw her gain a PB of 7.82sec winning her a silver medal, she also won a Bronze medal in the 200m with a time of 25.85sec. If this wasn't enough, she also won a silver medal in the W40 4×200 m relay.

Anne Nelson W70 (70-74) competed in the 60m, finishing with a bronze medal with an astonishing time of 10.19sec. To add to this medal, Anne also secured 3rd position and a bronze medal in the 200m with a time of 35.69sec.

Top photo: Lisa and Anne with their medals.

After a year of training, they were ready for the World Master Athletics Indoor Championships 2023 in Torun, Poland. Lisa and Anne train with Epsom & Ewell Harriers at the Harrier Centre, Poole Road. **Simon Bean**, President of Epsom & Ewell Harriers commented "We are so proud of Lisa and Anne, they have worked so hard throughout the year, to come away with so many medals is an incredible achievement."

The World Masters Indoor Championships enables athletes from across the world over the age of 35 to continue to compete in the sport they love. A celebration of athletics with age categories spreading right up to 85+ years of age.

Other news from Epsom and Ewell Harriers:

Epsom & Ewell Harriers shine through in the East Surrey Amateur Athletic League 2022/23. The recent third and final of the 3 East Surrey Amateur Athletic X-Country races took place at the Harrier Centre, Poole Road, Epsom. The 5-mile race was a 2-lap course with a mixture of on and off rd. Epsom & Ewell Harriers won 3 of the 4 team events, they were the overall team winners in the girls, men's and women's categories. Simon Bean, President of Epsom & Ewell Harriers said "this is an incredible result for the Club." In addition, there were some amazing individual Epsom & Ewell Harrier successes as follows:

Women

ı	7 IJ17	Women.	1st Sophie	Glencross	2nd Lily	Brown
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☐ U20 W- 1st **Georgina Winde**r

☐ Women overall: 2nd Helen Maguire, 3rd Georgina Winder

☐ W35-44: 1st **Helen Maguire**

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Men	
□ U13	Boys: 2nd Oliver Henderson
□ U20	men: 2nd George Hannay, 3rd Alex Rodriguez

☐ M45: 1st Gary Coleman☐ M50: 1st Steve Winder

☐ Men overall: 1st **Alex Gurteen**, 2nd **Steve Winder**

Epsom & Ewell Harriers welcomes new runners of all standards whether you've run before or not. For more information about our training sessions see here: https://eandeharriers.weebly.com/

"Is it promotion you're looking for?"

Back to back away victories for Epsom and Ewell FC win 2nd place in the league and home front play-offs for promotion. Richard Lambert reports on both matches:

Chessington & Hook United 1-2 Epsom & Ewell -Southern Combination League - Division One - Thursday 20th April 2023.

For the second match in a row we let a lead slip, but fought back to take all three points with a late winner, this time a close range 83rd minute header from Nick Wilson as we maintained our grip on the top playoff spot with a 2-1 victory over Chessington & Hook United at Chalky Lane.

The win maintained an extremely odd sequence of results between the clubs. At home we have only won one of our last eight matches against Chessington & Hook United, but at Chalky Lane it is a different story as we have only lost once in sixteen visits there! And in the end I felt we were worth the points, although there were times when I worried that it wasn't going to be our night as we spurned a number of good chances to make the game comfortable.

We made four changes from our win against Selsey with Athan Smith-Joseph rested after tweaking his hamstring on Saturday, while Alex Penfold and Rory Edwards came back into the starting line up at the expense of Steve Springett and Gavin Quintyne. Finally, further forward, Thompson Adeyemi came in for Jaan Stanley as we rotated our squad with one eye on another match coming up at Billingshurst in less than 48 hours.

We got off to a flying start with our first attack down the right wing where Adeyemi sent a low ball across goal and it was swept home clinically at the far post from twelve yards by Lewis Pearch in the 3rd minute to give us an early lead. Adeyemi then saw his shot blocked and also a follow up from Edwards as we tried to double our lead from a corner.

In the 13th minute it was Adeyemi again who tried his luck from twenty yards but found Chessington and Hook keeper Andrew Osei equal to the strike. The home side responded by forcing a couple of corners but we dealt with the deliveries into the box well enough and were soon on the attack again with Jamie Byatt seeing his shot tipped wide by Osei and then Dylan Merchant sending a header back across goal from a deep corner, only to see the ball cleared.

We had an excellent chance in the 41st minute when a defender's error let Pearch through on the right and his ball across goal was perfect for Adeyemi, but his left foot contact wasn't as secure as his right and a defender was able to clear the ball away from the goal line. Then Byatt had another try just before half time but his shot was straight at Osei and the last chance of the half also fell to Byatt whose twenty yard strike was far stronger than the one he netted with against Selsey on Saturday, but as a result it just didn't come down in time, clearing the bar by about three inches!

We should have been further ahead by the half and it is always a concern when chances aren't taken. Tom Theobald made a good block with his feet after a defensive slip, but we were back on the attack soon and a foul on Jaevon Dyer allowed us to float a free kick into the box, only for Osei to punch clear. The game was starting to get a little niggly, as is so often the case when these two teams meet and just after a bit of a scuffle the home side equalised with a ball in from the right that was collected by Joe Avery who cut inside Gideon Acheampong before firing the ball past Theobald at his near post from ten yards for the equaliser in the 55th minute.

This was ever so disappointing and we would have to go again. But we did. A Dyer run and pass to Wilson was hacked clear by Osei just ahead of our man who was then adjudged to have fouled the keeper. Stanley came on for Adeyemi and as we entered the final quarter of the match Dyer set up Pearch for a similar chance to the one he had scored from earlier, but this time he scuffed

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his shot wide of the post and then it was Dyer's chance to miss a good chance after great interplay between Stanley and Byatt had left him in space, but his touch let him down and Osei's leg was able to dispossess him.

Five minutes later Dyer robbed a defender and broke through on goal, drawing the keeper before flicking the ball on to Byatt, but instead of rolling the ball into the empty net from the edge of the area, he hesitated and a defender closed down the chance which then rebounded into Osei's arms! We made a couple of substitutions in the 77th minute with Springett and Quintyne entering the fray for Penfold and Byatt before we then had the second multi-player scuffle of the day, following a foul by Johnny Akoto, who was then kicked while on the deck. The refereeing could have been stronger in this match and although a card was issued to both sides here, it looked like the home team maybe ought to have seen red.

However, the main event occurred in the 83rd minute. Stanley was released down the right, although his ball across goal was just ahead of Wilson and just behind Dyer, by now operating on the left wing. He retrieved the ball though and sent a superb deep cross to the back post where Wilson met it with a solid downwards header just a couple of yards out from goal, giving Osei no chance to save it.

We played five minutes over the ninety which was about fair and managed the game well in that period with much of the time being spent near the corner flag and there were large celebrations from the away support and the players when the whistle blew for full time and the points were well deserved, even if we had required the late intervention to get all three of them.

So where does this leave us? Well, barring a seven goal swing in our final matches we will now finish in the top playoff spot, ensuring home matches throughout our participation in them. We are now level on points with second place Dorking Wanderers B whose goal difference is three goals better than ours. It is not impossible to catch them and if we could do that it would be the first time we had finished in the top two since 1984. As it is, third place is our highest finish since 2014 and represents a decent campaign, but concerns remain about our consistency as we approach the real business end of the season. A good showing against Billingshurst on Saturday is important to keep building any momentum before we return to Fetcham Grove to close out our season over hopefully the next two weekends.

Epsom & Ewell: Tom Theobald, Gideon Acheampong, Johnny Akoto, Nick Wilson, Dylan Merchant, Alex Penfold, Jaevon Dyer, Rory Edwards, Jamie Byatt, Thompson Adeyemi, Lewis Pearch

Subs: Jaan Stanley for Adeyemi (65), Steve Springett for Penfold (77), Gavin Quintyne for Byatt (77), Kevin Moreno-Gomez for Dyer (86), George Owusu for Pearch (88)

Billingshurst 1-3 Epsom & Ewell Southern Combination League - Division One - Saturday 22nd April 2023

Cast your mind back to 1984. Lionel Richie was Number 1 with Hello, Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister and our boys had just clinched promotion to the Isthmian League Premier Division with a late 2-1 win at Farnborough Town that secured second place as we waited in the clubhouse for our Secretary to get confirmation of other results on the one phone they had there.

How times have changed, but if you are under the age of 40, you'll just have to trust me on this one. It was the last time we had finished as high as second place in any division. I'll be honest, I wasn't expecting it as I thought Dorking Wanderers B would win at Mile Oak and we would fall just behind them on goal difference, but a late equaliser for the Oak enabled us to pinch the runners-up spot (and presumably individual medals for our boys?) against the odds.

We made four changes to our starting line up following our win at Chessington & Hook United some 42 hours earlier with Steve Springett coming in at the back for Dylan Merchant who was unavailable. Gavin Quintyne and George Owusu came in for Nick Wilson and Jaevon Dyer who dropped to the bench, while Athan Smith-Joseph who came back in up front ahead of Jamie Byatt. Or so we thought! As it turned out Johnny "Sonic" Akoto was injured in the warm up and so Byatt came back in with Lewis Pearch drawing the short straw and finding himself moving from up front to the right back position with Captain Gideon Acheampong moving over to the left.

But despite the rotations, we scored a goal in the opening ten minutes for the third match in a row. Smith-Joseph got away down the left and fired a cross in. The ball was palmed away by Ollie Courtney but fell kindly to George Owusu who guided his volley over everyone and into the far corner for a smart finish in just the fourth minute.

Unfortunately for the third week in a row we let that early lead slip as the hosts drew level just seven minutes later. Pearch tried to clear the ball under pressure in his unfamiliar position and the ball rebounded kindly for Sam Jobbins who had time to guide the ball beyond the reach of Tom Theobald into the far corner from just inside the penalty area.

We continued to make chances, particularly on the left, although the end product from Smith-Joseph was proving more of a threat to the trees behind the goal instead of the Billingshurst keeper. A Pearch chance deflected wide for a corner and then Owusu found Byatt but he was well marshalled and unable to get a powerful shot away.



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We had one scare when a deep free kick was sent into our penalty area and no one took responsibility, leaving Robbie Tambling unmarked to volley the ball goalwards, but fortunately he was unable to keep the ball down and we went in at the half ahead on points, but not on the scoreboard.

We thought we had taken the lead early in the second half when Smith-Joseph's cute through ball found Owusu who netted from a narrow angle, but he was denied by the Assistant's flag. Then at the other end we had danger after Alex Penfold lost the ball, but pulled the striker down to take one for the team. It was an obvious yellow card with Acheampong covering so no further penalty would follow and the free kick was easily gathered by Theobald. Our keeper was active again as he had to dive to his left to keep a powerful shot out and another shot went just wide of our goal as we looked a little wobbly at this stage.

However, we made three substitutions in ten minutes and Dyer then restored our lead within seconds of joining the fray; cutting in from the left and striking a shot at goal which took a deflection off a defender's outstretched leg and looped somewhat harshly over Courtney into the net in the 73rd minute.

We then had another chance when Dyer's initial cross was blocked back out to Smith-Joseph whose ball in to the near post was blazed over the bar by Wilson as the ball bobbled on him just four yards out, but fortunately just a couple of minutes later in the 79th minute we gained some breathing space when Smith-Joseph tried his luck with a strike that Courtney had covered, only for the ball to hit him squarely in the hands and just drop apologetically over the line for our third goal!

The hosts were looking visibly tired by now after matches on Tuesday and Thursday and with Dorking Wanderers leading at this stage, I was aware that two more goals would give us second place even if they held on to win. As it happened though, we wouldn't need them as the Mile Oak result went our way. It was all good, although there were a couple of injury concerns as Springett picked up a broken nose and then in the final minutes Penfold went down having pulled his groin, which threatens to put a premature end to his season. The injury gave Jack Porter a rare run out for the final moments, becoming to my knowledge the first person in club history to take the field with a number 21 shirt!

The result and the late drama elsewhere in our favour was reminiscent of that spring evening in 1984 and may well live as long in the memory. Back then of course, second place guaranteed us automatic promotion, while now we have to win two playoff matches to secure it, but unlike last season we go into these contests with as much momentum as anyone after compiling a run of five matches unbeaten with three straight wins. One of those was a 3-2 victory over Selsey who we now host just two weeks after they last visited and the hope is that we can repeat that victory this coming weekend. To paraphrase Lionel Richie, "is it promotion you're looking for?"

Epsom & Ewell: Tom Theobald, Gideon Acheampong, Lewis Pearch, Rory Edwards, Steve Springett, Alex Penfold, George Owusu, Gavin Quintyne, Jamie Byatt, Thompson Adeyemi, Athan Smith-Joseph

Subs: Jaan Stanley for Adeyemi (62), Nick Wilson for Edwards (72), Jaevon Dyer for Byatt (72), Jack Porter for Penfold (92) http://eefconline.co.uk/