

Saturday's rugby: SUTTON & EPSOM 22 -BANBURY 26

12 September 2022



A two minute silence for the Late Queen was observed before this tightly fought match played out on 10th September 2022. This fixture would have been the first league encounter between these two clubs at **Rugby Lane** [the home ground of **Sutton and Epsom RFC** situated just inside the borders of the **Borough of Epsom and Ewell,**] but the unusually dry summer adversely affected Sutton and Epsom's pitches. Therefore, in accordance with the regulations the hosts found an alternative venue and were most grateful to the generosity and hospitality of Cobham RFC for letting them use their splendid synthetic surface at Fairmile Lane. This was the first time in the league era that Sutton & Epsom had played a home fixture on a neutral venue though the club have experienced this situation on their travels in the past.

There were seven changes to the squad that lost the opener to Bracknell last Saturday. Returning to the fold were Sutton & Epsom's stalwarts George Drye, James Caddy and Stefan Cooksammy. In comparison Robbie Martey (Barnes) was making his debut for the Black & Whites. Meanwhile Ross Parsons, Charlie Aylward and Luke Halford were making their first appearances of the campaign. Banbury also failed to win their first game of the season as visitors Havant triumphed at Bodicote Park 26-18. Both clubs were eager to get off the mark and record their first points at the second time of asking. It was mission accomplished for the visitors who recorded a 26-22 win and a bonus point to boot.

After the observation of the silence for Queen Elizabeth II Banbury kicked off the fixture. Soon the Bulls were on the scoreboard after solid ball from the scrum it was spun down the line and Quinten Blythe broke away down the flank and passed to supporting full back Tommy Gray to score for the perfect start. Ed Phillips added the extras for a 7-0 lead. S&E came back strongly with a charge down and turn over from the restart. To add to the woes of the hosts Stefan Cooksammy departed injured to be replaced by Sam Hurley.

Having reshuffled their resources the Rugby Lane team pressed hard to draw level. Just before the end of the first quarter the Black & Whites kicked a penalty into the corner. Following a line out and another penalty hooker James Craig forced his way over from a rolling maul for his first S&E try. Freddy Bunting added the conversion to level it at 7-7.

The game ebbed and flowed with Luke Halford closest to scoring when he was held up over the line as the half hour approached. Five minutes later James Craig went from hero to villain as he was penalised for a high tackle on wing Alex Garbett. S&E would have to endure ten minutes without their hooker. Despite some cussed defence by the Surrey men Banbury would not be denied. Recycling the ball quickly they broke through on the blindside and lock Louis Tooth strode over to score. Ed Phillips added the kick to lead 14-7 in time added on in the first period. There was no further score in the lengthy period of injury time. Sutton returned to their full compliment but James Craig remained on the sidelines with tactical substitute George London continuing whilst the sacrificial lamb, Austin Bell, returned to the fray.

The opening quarter of an hour of the second period saw both sides best play undermined by errors. Then the Oxfordshire team knocked on from a Sutton line out. From the scrum S&E went blind and Robbie Martey touched down to score on his debut. Bunting's conversion drifted wide as the home team trailed 12-14. S&E were given a helping hand when the Bulls hooker Nick Agbo saw yellow for a deliberate knock on. Then another penalty gave Freddy Bunting the chance to take the lead and he obliged with a well struck kick for a slender 15-14 advantage with a dozen minutes to go. The lead lasted only seconds as Banbury playing their best rugby put together their phases and made the crucial line break to see winger Alex Garbett score. With Ed Phillips' conversion bisecting the uprights the visitors had a 21-15 lead. A couple of minutes later Tommy Gray pounced on a knock on, scored his second try and the Bodicote Boys had secured a bonus point for a fourth try. Despite the missed conversion the rapid 12-point burst after they had momentarily trailed meant Banbury led 26-15 with five minutes remaining of normal time.

The Black & Whites needed an immediate response and they regathered the restart and forced a penalty. A few phases later and veteran Sam Hurley was through for the try. The conversion was added by Freddy Bunting and Sutton were within a score as they trailed 22-26. The Oxfordshire men pressed hard for the decisive score but stout Sutton resistance prevailed though at the cost of an injured Josh Glanville who was forced off the pitch. In a frenetic finale Luke Halford made a 30 metre break to raise the hopes of the S&E followers but the visitors' line was not seriously threatened.

With no further addition to the score Banbury had earned their first points of the campaign and a win on the road. Sutton & Epsom were unfortunate to suffer early injuries to not only Stefan Cooksammy but also Alex Mount. However, it was their self-inflicted wounds that were their undoing in a contest that could have gone either way. Tommy Gray was the Man of the Match with a couple of tries in a performance that carried a constant threat. For the Black & Whites Robbie Martey rounded off an impressive debut with a try. It was a case of the curate's egg for James Craig with a try and a yellow card to add to the now familiar strikes against the head. Freddy Bunting endorsed his growing reputation with fine place-kicking to add to his already considerable all around game.

Next Saturday, 17th September, will see the Black & Whites visit fellow Surrey club Camberley for the first time for a league fixture since January 2013. The hosts after an impressive opening day win over Wimbledon stumbled at the second Havant hurdle and will be keen to return to winning ways. The kick off will be 3pm at Watchetts Recreation Ground as Sutton & Epsom seek their first success of the season.

Sutton & Epsom

Austin Bell, Charlie Aylward, Freddy Bunting, Stefan Cooksammy, Robbie Martey, Jamie See, Ross Parsons, Alex Mount, James Craig, Luke Halford, Ben Tame, George Drye, Tom Brooker, Chris Farrell © & James Caddy.

Replacements: (all used) Tom Boaden, Josh Glanville & Sam Hurley.

Banbury

Tommy Gray, Quinten Blythe, Thomas Burman, Louis Richards, Alex Garbutt, Oscar Triggs, Ed Phillips, James Leonardi, Nick Agbo, Sonny Rowe, Louis Tooth, Jacob Turner, James Hibbert, George Ding & Ed Berridge.

Replacements: (all used) Ian Isham, Jacob Mills & Dan Brady.

Other Results From Round 2

BRACKNELL 14 29 MAIDENHEAD

HAVANT 18 6 CAMBERLEY

OXFORD HARLEQUINS 21 13 BOURNEMOUTH

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT 12 22 LONDON WELSH

WIMBLEDON 55 26 BRIGHTON

Salts strike Anvils from League Cup

12 September 2022



Crawley Down Gatwick 2-3 Epsom & Ewell FC. Southern Combination League Peter Bentley Cup - Second Round. Tuesday 6th September 2022. Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk Reporter: Richard Lambert.

Our first ever visit to the Haven produced a fine performance from our boys as they knocked Step Five Crawley Down Gatwick out of the Southern Combination Peter Bentley League Cup on Tuesday evening.

We had obviously given Step Five Redhill a decent match recently in the FA Vase, so our Management will have expected nothing less in this contest, despite being underdogs on paper. Fortunately we were able to recall Richard Pingling after his two match suspension was completed, although in the absence of Gideon Acheampong, Johnny "Sonic" Akoto came in at right back and Ricardo Fernandes took on the Captain's armband.

The Haven has changed greatly since my previous visit in the 1990s and it has become an enclosed and extremely picturesque tree-lined venue. However, there is limited cover behind both goals and a rainstorm accompanied the opening minutes of the contest!

Fortunately it subsided quickly and we got off to a fine start. A Ryan Smith long range effort was deflected wide for a corner and from Smith's low set-piece delivery to the near post in the fifth minute the ball was casually flicked into the roof of the net on the half-volley by Brad Peters, who has now registered four goals already this season. Not bad for a centre-half!

Pingling was inches wide of the far post with a low strike from a Fernandes pass, while Jaevon Dyer found himself in a great position, only to scuff his shot and the danger was cleared. Fernandes had a similar opportunity just before this and Peters headed a Smith free kick over the bar, before Pingling then intercepted a poor back pass but was then smothered by about four defenders before he could make it count. We thoroughly deserved our lead at the half and arguably it could have been larger, with the only concerns being a harsh yellow card for Jubril "Jibs" Adamson and a sin-bin for Zach Powell in the 37th minute, which was still in force as the teams went off at the half, with only a header wide of the target and a shot blocked just before the break being registered by the hosts to this point.

The second half would be more even in terms of possession, but shortly after Powell returned to the field of play we had extended our lead. A fantastic pass from Gavin Quintyne in the 47th minute was sent perfectly into the stride of substitute Josh Owen who chested the ball down, before striking the ball across the keeper into the far corner for his first goal for our club.

Crawley Down pulled a goal back in the 59th minute with a ball through our defence that was struck low beyond Matt Walton from close range, but just five minutes later we restored our two goal lead and this time the superb assist came from Pingling, way out on the right hand touchline; his deep ball to the far post being met by a left-footed volley from Fernandes about four yards out, giving the home keeper no chance.

Further substitutions came as Nick Wilson, Adam Grant and then Josh Alder came on in quick succession. I'm not sure

what anyone else thinks about the new five substitutes rule, but one thing is for certain, the games become far more stop-start in the second half as up to ten stoppages can occur now. It certainly seemed to break up our flow and the home side started to press us back a lot more as they chased the match.

A long range strike looped up off a defender and just dropped over Walton's bar, but the respite was brief as the subsequent corner was met with a far post header from close range in the 78th minute as the hosts reduced the score to 3-2, and we picked up an unnecessary card when Alder kicked the ball away. It did seem a little harsh on our boys who seemed to be penalised for things in this match that the opponents didn't, and by the end even free kicks were being taken from advanced positions with the officials seeming not to notice. As the time ran down, a long range strike was tipped over the bar by Walton, but by now we were in the sixth minute of injury time and the final whistle blew shortly afterwards to confirm our progress.

This was a thoroughly deserved win against a good team and in truth I felt that the scoreline should probably have been wider on the balance of play, but ultimately we claimed the win and will now host Broadbridge Heath in the last 16 of the competition.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Johnny "Sonic" Akoto, Zach Powell, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Brad Peters, Aaron Bogle, Ricardo Fernandes (c), Gavin Quintyne, Richard Pingling, Jubril "Jibs" Adamson, Jaevon Dyer

Subs: Josh Owen for Adamson (41), Nick Wilson for Dyer (60), Adam Grant for Smith (68), Josh Alder for Pingling (80)

Rugby opener: Bracknell 34 Sutton & Epsom 14

12 September 2022



With ten changes to the **Sutton and Epsom** squad that ended last season and five debutants, Messrs Benton J, Bunting, Craig, Glanville and Tame, the Black & Whites embarked on the new campaign. Ciaran Mohr kicked off on a sultry afternoon playing towards the clubhouse as the hosts returned to level the lively opening exchanges Sutton & Epsom looked to play with width and **Bracknell** showed panache when countering against clearances. The first opportunity arose in the third minute when the hosts were awarded a penalty. Ollie Radford stepped up to open Bracknell's account for the season to lead 3-0. From the restart S&E countered from the clearance as Freddy Bunting make a break and Jamie See carried it to the 22 before conceding a scrum. The Berkshire club using the blindside and the jinking footwork of captain Ian Burch surged to halfway. A pulsating opening to the match promised tries in the future for the Lily Hill Park crowd.

The Sutton scrummage was reassuringly solid for the visitors and provided the platform for Gareth O'Brien have plenty of time for a probing kick into the 22. However, in the blink of an eye an attacking opportunity turned to desperate defence. Fumbling pin ball at the line out saw the Greens recover the ball and explode out of defence on the narrow side with Ian Burch to the fore.

Jamie See covering back made a splendid try-saving tackle but whilst on the deck tackled the supporting runner. A penalty and a yellow card saw the Black & Whites defending a scrum 10 metres out with 14 men. The home crowd urged on their team who looked to seize the moment. Magnificent defence on their line thwarted multiple attacks until the defenders turned over the ball on their line as the attackers conceded a penalty. Freddy Bunting cleared to the halfway as Sutton survived.

Sutton & Epsom did extremely well to run down the clock whilst they endured the ten minutes of numerical deficiency. Indeed a great scrum led to a penalty and a break from Freddy Bunting got them to 10 metres shy of the line. However, every time Bracknell got the ball they were eager to make the extra man count. A fine James Craig tackle thwarted the first counter. Another powerful S&E scrum won a penalty. In the last minute of the ten on the card it looked like a perfectly timed offload by Alex Fieldhouse had set the hosts free as they sped away from halfway with a wonderful chance to score. The shrill blast of the whistle brought the play back for a forward pass from the referee who was well placed to adjudicate. Jamie See returned as the game entered the second quarter.

A searching kick from Gareth O'Brien was followed by an impressive catch and drive as the visiting pack looked to impose themselves on the game. The well organised Bracknell defence were containing the Sutton backs as they tried to play a wide game and were denying the Surrey club who were starting to enjoy more of the territory and possession. Another Bunting carry led to a penalty and the centre stepped up to arrow the ball into the corner. A fine catch and drive led to a penalty 5 metres out. The forwards went close, Jamie See went even closer before finally George London forced his way over under the posts after formidable defence by the hosts. In the turmoil on the line the influential Bracknell Number 8 Ken Hodgson was issued with a yellow card.

Sam Hurley added the easiest of conversions as Sutton took a 7-3 lead on the half hour. It was Bracknell's turn to survive with 14 men and Sutton brought on Will Lloyd and Jack Benton for Alex Mount and George London during this phase hoping that fresh legs would increase their chances to extend their lead. The hosts absorbed not only the visitors attacks but also scored a splendid try. Once again they exploited the narrow side but on this occasion the always dangerous Ian



Burch rounded the cover and joyously touched down near the uprights. Ollie Radford added the extras as the 14 men regained the lead by 10-7. Moments later Kyren Ghumra was forced off with a groin injury and Jack Butt came off the bench as the first half concluded with no further addition to the score. Both sides retreated to the dressing rooms to receive the wise words from their coaches as the crowd replenished their glasses.

The players returned and the hosts restarted play. Sutton made one change at the interval as Mount replaced Boaden in the front row. The Bracknell pack who had struggled at the set scrum in the first period improved after the interval and after 5 minutes won a penalty as the scrum collapsed. Ollie Radford's aim was sound once more and the lead stretched to 13-7. Sutton pressed hard to get back on terms in the next ten minutes. Promising breaks were snuffed by the impressive Berkshire defences but at a cost as they lost Alex Fieldhouse and Liam Wood to injuries. Despite the visitors' pressure a solitary penalty miss from Sam Hurley was the closest they came to reducing the deficit.

In contrast Bracknell scored on their first visit to the S&E 22. A sloppy line out saw the loose ball re-gathered by the hosts, a tackle was missed and moments later the powerful Ken Hodgson had scored under the posts. Ollie Radford made no mistake as the men in Green led 20-7. The S&E response was immediate. They won a penalty at the restart and Freddy Bunting rifled his kick to the corner. From the line out 10 metres from the line Sutton patiently mounted a series of attacks against the miserly home defence. Eventually Alex Mount squeezed in by the posts. Sam Hurley chipped over the conversion to trail 20-14. The see-saw nature of the second period had another twist minutes later. Simon Bayliss found space and his powerful well angled run scythed through the Black & White's defences for a wonderful try. The reliable boot of Ollie Radford increased the gap as Bracknell led 27-14.

Moments later saw the visitors awarded a 5-metre scrum and it was the Lily Hill Park team's turn to thwart their opposition on the line. The turnover ball and the scrum allowed Bracknell to clear the danger. Ten minutes remained but it felt like a pivotal moment when Sutton had to score. The Black & Whites failed to create any further chances and it was Bracknell who ended the contest in style. With the lengthy time added on nearly complete the man of the match, Simon Bayliss, received the ball in space and charged through neatly sidestepping the last man to score. The bonus point secured, the conversion added by Ollie Radford and only time for the restart kick it was a job well done by Bracknell as they eased to a 34-14 victory.

The score-line probably did not reflect the closeness of the game. A keenly contested first half where S&E edged territory and possession had given Bracknell a slender lead. In the second period the hosts took their chances with clinical efficiency. The wingers, Bayliss and Burch, were a threat throughout and collected a trio of tries. In the pack Ken Hodgson rounded off an impressive afternoon with the other try. Perhaps key to the hosts success was their disciplined and organised defence that contained Sutton's attempts at an expansive game. For the Black & Whites Freddy Bunting had a strong debut in attack and defence as well as kicking well from hand. Austin Bell, in the absence of the usual incumbents at 9, was in no way overawed by the occasion. The Sutton pack scrummaged and mauled impressively and had periods of dominance though the line out faltered too often. The trio of debutants in the starting pack, Craig, Glanville and Tame, all showed promise for the future on an afternoon that was not as doom-laden as the final score might suggest. Bracknell were worthy winners and great credit must be given to those concerned with preparing the pitch in testing conditions many hours of hard work and dedication resulted in an excellent playing surface.

Continuing with the topic of pitches an early decision was made not to use the pitch at Rugby Lane next Saturday due to its condition. Various alternative scenarios were explored before deciding upon playing the 10th September fixture at Cobham RFC. It will be the first occasion in the league era that Sutton & Epsom have played a home fixture at a neutral venue though we have been shunted to alternative surroundings several times as the visitors. Apologies in advance for those spectators who turn up at Rugby Lane next Saturday expecting to see Sutton & Epsom v Banbury but they really should read the Epsom & Ewell Times, the club website or their email communications.

Sutton & Epsom

Sam Hurley, Ciaran Mohr, Freddy Bunting, Jamie See, Kyren Ghumra, Gareth O'Brien, Austin Bell, Alex Mount, James Craig, Tom Boaden, Josh Glanville, Matt Harwood, Ben Tame, George London & Chris Farrell ©.

Replacements: (all used) Will Lloyd, Jack Benton & Jack Butt.

Bracknell

Will Field, Simon Bayliss, Alex Fieldhouse, Ollie Radford, Ian Burch ©, Alex Frame, Matt Outson, Jasper Miranda, Bradley Waters, Jake Hodge, Callum Russell, Tom Scott, Liam Wood, Tom Field, Ken Hodgson.

Replacements: (all used) James Gregory, George Milligan & Noah Cannon.

NOTE:

The RFU have restructured the league pyramid in a desire to reflect the trends of the game in the current era. Following a lengthy survey it was decided to reduce the number of league games and the travelling involved for many clubs. Last season's London & SE Premier fourteen clubs were released to the four winds and were distributed into two 12-team leagues. Sutton & Epsom are in Regional 1 South Central and have seven new opponents for this campaign. From the London & SE structure are the newly promoted London 1 South champions Camberley who are joined by the historic London Welsh. Promoted from the South West Premier come champions Oxford Harlequins, Banbury and Bracknell. Finally, through a formula only known by the chosen few at the RFU, Bournemouth and Royal Wootton Bassett are transferred from the West. Just when the rugby fraternity thought that normality had returned after the interruptions of covid the clubs were faced with the more traditional hurdle of weather-related impediments. As

people of a certain vintage reflected upon the summer of '76 there was a flurry of communications between the RFU and League secretaries concerning the state of pitches and match preparedness of playing squads whose pre-season might have been inadvertently affected by conditions. The final RFU missive was despatched on 30th August with eleven points that hoped to cover every scenario. Fortunately S&E opened their account at Bracknell RFC whose facilities at Lily Hill Park were in good order and their team primed for the initiation of hostilities. The last occasion that the Black & Whites visited the Berkshire club it was a day for club masochists as the hosts put Sutton to the sword to the tune of 76-0. Saturday's encounter bore no resemblance to that thrashing but Bracknell did record a 34-14 triumph to start their season with a win.

Epsom and Ewell Top the Table

12 September 2022



Oakwood 0-5 Epsom & Ewell, Southern Combination League - Division One, Monday 29th August 2022. Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk. Reporter: Richard Lambert.

Any disappointment felt in the FA Vase defeat at Redhill on Saturday was firmly banished less than 48 hours later as we thrashed Oakwood 5-0 on the Bank Holiday Monday morning to go top of the League table for the first time this season.

It was almost a perfect day for a Salts supporter. Five goals, no bookings, a clean sheet and no apparent injuries. In fact, the only disappointment was the lack of a match day programme from the hosts, who had promised there would be one online. As far as I am aware, a programme is still mandatory in our league, yet it's the third time in recent months that this has happened and it is probably time that the League reminded the clubs of their obligation to produce something that many supporters still want to see at each game.

The quick turnaround between fixtures always meant it was likely there would be changes to our line up, although only three were made; Johnny "Sonic" Akoto was unavailable, so Zach Powell moved to left back and recent re-joiner Gavin Quintyne made his first start for us, slotting seamlessly into Powell's vacated midfield role. Up front Josh Alder came in for Jaevon Dyer and at the back Andy "Woody" Hall came back in for the absent Aaron Bogle. We would see two further debuts from the bench in this match as Nick Wilson and Jack Porter would each get their first run outs of the season.

We had performed creditably at Step Five Redhill, but so had Oakwood as they had lost narrowly 3-2 at another good Step Five team in Fisher, so although they had been struggling with early league form, this looked like it would be a tricky fixture to negotiate. However, after an even ten minutes we scored an early goal going down the slope and never looked in danger from that point onwards.

The scorer of our first goal was Jubril "Jibs" Adamson who received the ball from Tiago Andrade and curled the ball left-footed into the far top corner from outside of the penalty area in just the eighth minute. You couldn't have placed the ball any further into the corner of the net without hitting the post or bar and the keeper, understandably had no chance of saving it.

We had already made a couple of chances by this point with a Hall header and an Alder volley both being just off target, but the home team had put a couple of dangerous balls in to our area themselves; one coming just after our opener with a far post header from the Oakwood number 11, but we were soon back on the attack and Adamson struck at goal once again after being found by a clever back heel by Andrade, although the home keeper was able to make the save easily enough.

We nearly extended the lead when a Smith free kick was up and over the wall, but was inches wide; grazing the back stanchion of the goal from twenty yards out and then Peters, already looking for his fourth goal of the season, saw his shot deflected over, although a goal kick was awarded.

We had a shout for a penalty when the home keeper came out for a high ball and appeared to clatter into Andrade first, but the ball was only half cleared to Smith and his long range shot was deflected kindly into the path of Alder who kept his composure to slot the ball under the advancing keeper from eight yards to register his first competitive goal for our club in the 37th minute.

We had further chances before the half with Alder and Andrade both forcing saves from the keeper and then Alder dragged a low shot across goal, just beyond the far post from a good position. However, we were well in charge by this point and I was confident that we could go on and score further goals in the second half.

And that is just what happened, although we had two good opportunities before that third goal did come, firstly from Quintyne who ran on to a good pass, but then saw his shot well blocked by the keeper, and then when Athan Smith-Joseph's ball across goal took a hop on the long grass and bounced straight over Adamson's leg. Fortunately our winger was on target soon after this, thanks to a lovely slide rule pass from Quintyne, only to see the shot saved but rebound onto the knee of the retreating number 3 and dribble apologetically into the net for an own goal in the 55th minute.

Wilson, Ricardo Fernandes and then Josh Owen joined the match and Matt Walton had a rare involvement as he had to tip

a header from an Oakwood corner away, but we scored our fourth goal in the 62nd minute when Owen held the ball up on the left and drew defenders before crossing for the unmarked Fernandes to stroke the ball into the far corner from ten yards.

Owen was unfortunate to see his powerful header from Wilson's free kick ruled out for an offside flag, but we had a fifth goal in the 75th minute and it came from an unlikely source as Gideon Acheampong had made a fine run and received a return pass into stride from Smith-Joseph and finished clinically low to the keeper's left and just inside the near post from eight yards out. Cue large celebrations as it was only our Captain's second goal for the club in his 69th Salts appearance.

That would conclude the scoring for this match, although Walton had a scare at the other end when he appeared to take his eye off the ball and it came back off the frame of the goal before he gathered it, while our coach Porter came on in the final moments, getting bundled over in the box, but the referee wasn't interested and to be fair, he was probably right!

In truth this was a very comfortable win for our boys. Oakwood were not in the same league on the day and with a few more performances like this, maybe the two teams will actually be in different leagues next season as for the first time in 2022/23 we can actually look down from the top of the table, even though we probably won't be there after next Saturday as we are the odd team in a seventeen team division and have no league match that day. Our next competitive match is a challenging League Cup tie at Step Five Crawley Down Gatwick on Tuesday 6th September.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Gideon Acheampong ©, Zach Powell, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Brad Peters, Andy "Woody" Hall, Athan Smith-Joseph, Gavin Quintyne, Tiago Andrade, Jubril "Jibs" Adamson, Josh Alder

Subs: Nick Wilson for Smith (57), Ricardo Fernandes for Alder (57), Josh Owen for Adamson (59), Louis Chin for Andrade (65), Jack Porter for Smith-Joseph (89)

Lobsters at home with Salts

12 September 2022



Salts battle hard but Lobsters progress in the Vase. Redhill 2-1 Epsom & Ewell. Isuzu F.A. Vase - First Qualifying Round. Saturday 27th August 2022. Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk Reporter: Richard Lambert

Our first Vase match of the season also became our last as we were defeated by Redhill at Kiln Brow on Saturday, but our opponents will know that they had to work for the full ninety minutes before coming through in a match that was ultimately only decided by a defensive error.

In fact, over the ninety minutes we had the greater chances and against a team in the top four of Step Five at the time the match kicked off, it was hard to tell that there was a full step between the two opponents. Although that didn't count for much in the end, our boys deserve a lot of credit and know that performances like this will result in a promotion at the end of the season, which was and remains our ultimate goal this season.

We made four changes to our starting line up with the injured Steve Springett, the unavailable Andy Hall and Adam Grant and the suspended Richard Pingling replaced by Johnny "Sonic" Akoto, Aaron Bogle, Tiago Andrade and Athan Smith-Joseph respectively. However, I have referred to our strength in depth and we looked as good this week as we had seven days previously at Worthing United.

Following a minute's silence for a Redhill Vice-President, Les Smith, we had a couple of early half chances with Ryan Smith's strike at goal and a nice bit of interplay between Jaevon Dyer and Andrade finished with a Dyer shot that was well blocked by the Redhill keeper Mike McEntegert. At the other end Matt Walton saved a low shot from Fred Hill with his feet after we were caught out by a long ball.

Our next chance fell to Zach Powell but he scuffed his shot from a good position before a defender made a great challenge to deny Dyer in the act of shooting. Then Dyer turned provider but Smith-Joseph couldn't quite direct his header on target at the far post. Next to try his luck was Smith from fully thirty yards although it was just wide of the post.

On the half hour Dyer struck another shot which I can confirm was creeping inside the post, but a defender's leg blocked the effort and the hosts broke with speed, earning a corner which was headed wide by Antonio Simeone. Then Walton was in action again, blocking away a shot from Jason Kaate, before Lyndon McGugan made a superb challenge after it looked as though Smith-Joseph would be able to finish easily when the ball fell kindly for him. Both of these Redhill players were with us briefly during the Covid friendly phase, although neither made a competitive appearance for us.

Dyer was giving the Redhill defence a lot of work and just before the break he was brought down by Sol Patterson-Bonner who earned the first yellow card of the day, but overall both teams looked solid in defence as we went in for half time with the goalless scoreline.

This looked like being a really tight encounter, decided by maybe just one goal, so when we took the lead in the 51st minute it looked like it might be pivotal. Dyer was again involved as he connected with a low ball in and his shot was well saved for a corner and from the Smith delivery Brad Peters rose highest to head home his third goal of the season from eight yards; his finish across McEntegert was unstoppable.

We could and maybe should have extended our lead a minute later when the ball was fed to Smith-Joseph, but his shot from ten yards was kept out by the keeper's feet. However, the game turned in the 56th minute. Dyer was brought down inside the penalty area, but it didn't look enough for a penalty for me. Meanwhile Redhill broke at pace and within seconds Yannick Monga ran in from the right and struck a low drive across Walton into the far corner. We had led for just five minutes.

Still we made chances as Andrade's delicious pass to Smith-Joseph was in stride, but his shot from six yards was straight at the advancing keeper and our flying winger was denied again by a saving defensive challenge minutes later. A couple of substitutions followed as Dyer and Jubril Adamson departed, but we failed to carry the same attacking threat that Dyer had posed and then in the 80th minute we tried to play out from the back, only for Max Oldham stole the ball, ran in and drilled the ball below Walton from close range for what proved to be the winner.

Moments later our Captain Gideon Acheampong to pick up a harsh yellow card for trying to get the ball off Oldham and nudging him over, although it should be noted that Oldham also received a card, but disaster then occurred in the final seconds when our defender tried to reach the ball to block an upfield clearance and he was adjudged to have caught the Redhill player, picking up a second card in the fourth minute of injury time. Clearly our Captain was angry at the decision, which I also thought was the wrong one. As it is Acheampong will now serve a one match suspension.

It is always unfortunate to depart the FA Vase. It is a competition that we have an indelible link with, having been one of the first two finalists in 1975 and we recognise our part in its history. However, as a Step Six team currently, promotion has to be our top priority and if we were going to get the rough end of a decision like that, then at least it didn't cost us league points. Hopefully we can put this result behind us when we face Oakwood on Monday morning as we go for our fourth League win in a row.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Gideon Acheampong ©, Johnny "Sonic" Akoto, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Brad Peters, Aaron Bogle, Athan Smith-Joseph, Zach Powell, Tiago Andrade, Jubril "Jibs" Adamson, Jaevon Dyer

Subs: Gavin Quintyne for Jaevon Dyer (69), Ricardo Fernandes for Adamson (69), Josh Alder for Powell (85)

Good start to season with Salts

12 September 2022

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Springett had a fine game on Wednesday against Forest Row, but his afternoon would end painfully and prematurely after



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

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

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

We made a couple more substitutions soon after this goal when Tiago Andrade and Josh Owen joined the action in the 63rd minute. However, the final twenty minutes of the match were all about the officials. I have no idea why but the referee suddenly started to issue cards, starting with Dean Sherwood the Worthing United Captain who was sent to the sin bin. While we had the one man advantage Andrade played a perfect pass into the stride of Pingling and as he drew his foot back to shoot, he was clattered into from behind by Younger, yet somehow neither the referee nor the Assistant saw the foul. It has to be one of the most clear non-awarded penalties I have seen in recent years and insult was added to injury when Andrade was involved with some good interplay with another substitute George Membrillera, but as Andrade drilled the ball below Scott the flag was raised for offside. It is possible that one or other of them may have been, but after the previous "non-call" a few minutes before, it was impossible to have confidence in the decision and certainly our players didn't seem to agree with it!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thrashing good win for the Salts

12 September 2022



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

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

Peters had been substituted on Saturday at Seaford Town, having been yellow carded and sin-binned in quick succession and it was notable that for this match Gideon Acheampong was wearing the Captain's armband instead, but our centre-half responded well with a superb performance defensively and the two goals provided the cherry on the cake! It was just a pity that his goals were only seen by a crowd (counted twice independently) of 66 people on a Wednesday night when there were few other matches taking place.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Two excellent strikes earn the points for Salts

12 September 2022



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

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

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

This was not an easy match to watch on a day where it was too hot for supporters, let alone players! The searing heat was constant, although in a strange way the players were helped a little by the stop-start nature of the game as a result of an over fussy and at times uncertain refereeing display which confused players and viewers alike. However, there were a number of positives to be taken from this match in addition to the obvious win. Both teams maintained a really high tempo throughout and the contest was a totally competitive one throughout, while we also showed good game management, both on and off the pitch to ensure that we remained ahead against an opponent who will be there or thereabouts at the end of the season.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shoreham 3-0 Epsom & Ewell

12 September 2022



Southern Combination League - Division One. Saturday 6th August 2022. Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk Reporter: Richard Lambert.

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

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

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

The match was fairly even from that point for the remainder of the half. In fact, it could be argued that we were holding

the balance of possession and Adam Grant's shot at goal in the 28th minute would have tested Sam Marsden the home keeper, had it not taken a heavy deflection on the way which ensured that it dribbled into his arms instead. It is important to note that this was our only shot on target in the entire match.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Salts falter at final friendly

12 September 2022



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 September 2022



Pre-season Friendly Friday 29th July 2022 Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk Reporter: Richard Lambert

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

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

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

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

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

We were caught out at the start of the second half as a low ball in from the left was tapped in at the far post by Eddie Simon for Walton and Hershham's second goal in the 48th minute, and soon after this we made six changes, in addition to the two made either side of half time, although despite the disruption to our side the match remained competitive

throughout. We clearly have a number of players fighting for places right now and all are contributing. It's a nice problem for our Management to have!

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

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

Epsom & Ewell dominate Croydon (in football friendly).

12 September 2022



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Epsom & Ewell 1-1 Horsham YMCA

12 September 2022



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

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

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

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

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

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Epsom and Ewell FC on a friendly hat-trick.

12 September 2022



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But that will have to wait until the season commences as we are scheduled to visit here twice more, and on this display we

have to assume that if this is the make up of the Dorking Wanderers Reserve side for this season then they will be right up there battling for the title too. Our side is still being tweaked with at this stage of the season though and I believe we will improve further before the season commences.

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