



Epsom Derby Day Tips

Derby Day at Epsom is one of the highlights of the British racing calendar, with a stellar card for racegoers to enjoy in Surrey on Saturday afternoon.

The Derby itself is a hugely historic race, having been held at the Surrey course for a remarkable 245 years. The free entry for the inner course makes the event even more unique, providing families the perfect opportunity to enjoy a day of racing, with seven races in total on the card.

Wet weather is projected for Derby Day, with thunderstorms presenting the possibility of disruption, but a top class cast of runners and riders will bring in the punters.

Read below for a preview of the Epsom card courtesy of **Racing TV**, who offer the latest horse racing free bet offers.

13:00 Princess Elizabeth Stakes (Fillies' And Mares' Group 3)

The opening race of the day will see 11 runners taking the just over a mile trip for this Group 3 contest. The two favourites for the race look to be Royal Dress and **Skellet**, with little to choose between this pair, the latter's scope for improvement this season and form on softer ground gives her the edge for this contest.

13:35 Betfred Diomed Stakes (Group 3)

For this second Group 3 contest, this race has an interesting triple Group 3 winner from Germany, in the form of Geography. However, a lack of UK experience and inclement weather conditions on good to soft ground suggests the likes of **Persica**, could fare better, having won in similar conditions in April at Newmarket.

14:10 Betfred 3yo 'Dash' Handicap

A large field will line up for the third race, which is a 5f 'Dash' which is the only Class 3 race of the afternoon. **Mademoiselle** looks a progressive type and made a strong second-placed start to this season having finished 2024 in fine form with two wins, although this is a step up in class.

14:45 Aston Martin 'Dash' Handicap (Heritage Handicap)

Another short race to precede the main event of the afternoon, with this one being a Class 2 contest. Oisin Murphy's presence on board **Jer Batt** is a positive indicator for a horse who is also on a competitive mark for trainers David & Nicola Barron, making this one to watch.

15:30 Betfred Derby (Group 1)

One of the highlights of the season, The Derby is run over 1m4f with prize money of £909,628 for the winner making it the richest race of the British Flat season.

Vying for this prize will be the leading trainers and jockeys, with the combination of Aidan O'Brien and Ryan Moore winning an 11th Oaks for O'Brien on Friday, a feat they could repeat for the Derby. They will combine to boost Delacroix's hopes, but **Pride Of Arras** is a huge hope after just two races for Ralph Beckett and good pedigree for this trip.

16:15 Encore Lifestyle Northern Dancer Handicap (GBBPlus Race)

Up next, another race run over 1m4f, but this time a handicap. An interesting contest, but with a favourite who has gone well in the mud for Ralph Beckett, it will be hard to look past **Valvano**, who also has handicap form.

17:00 Hong Kong Jockey Club World Pool Lester Piggott Handicap (GBBPlus Race)

The penultimate race of the day is a Class 2 with a £38k prize for the winner, to keep the punters entertained following the main event. Despite a disappointing handicap debut, **Hornsea Bay** has since been gelded and could go well under Danny Tudhope.

17:40 JRA Tokyo Trophy Handicap

The final race of the day, and the 2025 Derby meeting, is a 6f sprint. For this, **Eye Of Dubai** looks like an interesting proposition for a yard which has won this race twice before, and has two Class 2 wins under their belt to call upon when checking the form book.

Selections:

13:00 - Skellet - 9/2



13:35 - Persica - 5/2

14:10 - Mademoiselle - 6/1

14:45 - Jer Batt - 13/2

15:30 - Pride of Arras - 5/1

16:15 - Valvano - 9/2

17:00 - Hornsea Bay - 11/2

17:40 - Eye Of Dubai - 13/2

Image: Horses racing Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

Epsom Racecourse: Preview and Tips for Oaks Day

The Derby meeting is upon us and the greatly-anticipated Oaks Day card hosts seven intriguing races.

Read below for a preview of the Epsom card courtesy of **Racing TV**, who offer the latest horse racing **free bet offers**.

Kicking off the afternoon's top class action is the Listed Surrey Stakes, run over seven furlongs (1.30). Topping the ratings is The Waco Kid, whose two starts so far this season has been far below his best, so connections try him in first time cheekpieces here in the hope that he can recapture his Tattersalls Stakes winning form of last year, in which race he finished ahead of Diego Ventura. Given a fair amount of weight by the colts, Formal might spring a surprise on a track which just might suit her.

Next is the two-year-olds' Woodcote Stakes over six furlongs (2.05), which introduces just one debutant in the shape of George Baker's Trinculo, who has his work cut out for him on his first try here amongst a high quality field. Charlie Appleby has a very good strike rate at Epsom, therefore his talented, fast colt Maximised looks the most likely of these, but Havana Hurricane could be a close second.

The Group 1 Coronation Cup is next, with a quality multi-national field of seven runners (2.40). French raider Calandagan tops the ratings, has beaten some of his opponents here in the past and is fit from a run in Dubai in April. He's tough and will be up to this, but is untried at this tricky track. Bellum Justum ran a good race in the Derby over course and distance last year and has taken a step forward this term already, so could pick up a place at least. Irish Oaks winning filly You Got To Me musn't be underestimated in this company, but does lack a prep run.

3.15 brings the Nifty 50 Handicap, run over a mile and quarter. John & Thady Gosden have a very strong strike rate of 31% at Epsom, therefore their runner Mutaawid is worth considering after a particularly impressive six-length win last time at Newmarket, but he has been heavily penalised for that performance by the handicapper. Roger Varian's Defiance should have a chance, having finished a close second over course and distance last year in the Blue Riband Trial, but may need this run to get up to speed for the season, leaving Rathgar looking a good option with proven ability over undulating tracks and remaining on the same mark as his last three starts.

The eagerly anticipated feature is next; the Group 1 Oaks over a mile and a half (4.00). Godolphin's 1,000 Guineas winning Desert Flower is the best on ratings by a long way, but she is untried over this trip. There is, however, plenty of staying power throughout her pedigree, so this is unlikely to have too great an impact on her ability to win the second leg of the fillies' Triple Crown. Aidan O'Brien's Miinie Hauk ought to be her main competition, but Ed Walker's Qilin Queen, who is well equipped with a staying pedigree and shouldn't be underestimated.

The penultimate race of Oaks Day is a handicap run over a mile and half a furlong (4.35). Ebt's Guard is slowly improving and could be at the sharp end here, while Bopedro comes from David O'Meara's bang in-form stable and wouldn't be without a chance having placed on both his last starts with an eye-catching jockey booking in Rossa Ryan. Two Tempting is last year's winner, but has risen sharply in the weights since that performance. A lower weighted, reliable sort such as Mr Baloo might be a better option.

The finale is a seven-furlong handicap of 13 runners (5.10). Rhoscolyn was last year's winner of this race, and returns on a one-pound lower mark than his victory, but he might want slightly good to soft or soft ground. Although well beaten by Rhoscolyn that day, Darkness does have good course form and, having won well last time out at Thirsk, arrives in good sorts. He might prefer good ground here, but is versatile enough to cope with softer going if the rain comes.



Epsom selections - Friday

1.30 - Formal

2.05 - Maximised

2.40 - Calandagan

3.15 - Rathgar

4.00 - Qilin Queen e/w

4.35 - Mr Baloo

5.10 - Darkness

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Feast of Finals see Sutton & Epsom RFC runner-up

On Saturday, Dings Crusaders RFC hosted a veritable feast of four finals. A large and enthusiastic crowd was bathed in unbroken sunshine.

The day began with the amuse-bouche of Ashley Down Old Boys downing the colours of Hastings & Bexhill to the tune of 34-20. Next came the hors d'oeuvres, as Cheltenham North overcame Honiton 38-32. The penultimate plate served up a thrilling 28-24 win for Ealing Trailfinders over Old Bristolians.

The afternoon culminated in the main course: the Papa Johns Regional 2 South Plate Final between Sutton & Epsom and Drybrook. The latter, having lost this fixture 42-29 to Reed's Weybridge last year, came into this match on a season of unbridled success. Champions of the Regional 2 Tribute Severn League and winners of the Forest of Dean Combination Senior Cup with a 37-27 triumph over Cinderford, Drybrook now completed a trophy treble by vanquishing Sutton 36-27.

Freddy Bunting initiated proceedings, and the Squirrels dominated the early exchanges. A penalty was advanced to the 22. Having secured possession from their throw, Drybrook cut through the defence but lost the ball near the line. Fortunately, the referee brought play back for an earlier infringement. Fullback Haydn Lewis stepped up to give Drybrook a 3-0 lead. Sutton's start was further hampered by a cut to Ewan McTaggart's eye that temporarily forced the gargantuan lock off to be bandaged up.

The first signs of recovery came from a searing break by Tom Lennard that brought Sutton close to the enemy 22. Awarded a penalty, Sutton drilled it into the corner. McTaggart returned, the ball was won, and hooker Sam Lennie crossed the whitewash for the first try of the afternoon. Captain Bunting added the extras to give Sutton a 7-3 lead.

Invigorated, Josh Rea made a fabulous break that led to another penalty on the 22. However, the doughty Drybrook defence held firm. The game flowed end to end. On the half-hour mark, Sutton were awarded a penalty and Drybrook's Jack Moss was shown a yellow card. Opting for a try over points, S&E were rewarded as Sam Lennie forced his way over for a second try. Though the conversion missed, the Sutton supporters were soon celebrating again. McTaggart and Glanville secured the restart, and Adam Bibby jinked his way 40 metres to score a stunning solo effort. Bunting converted, taking Sutton to a 19-3 lead.

As has so often been the case in this annus mirabilis for Drybrook, it was their talismanic captain Mitchell Bourne who provided inspiration. He powered over the line from a catch-and-drive, with Lewis adding the conversion from the flank to close the gap to 19-10.

Approaching the break, Sutton were awarded a penalty near halfway. With clock awareness, Bunting knocked over the long-range effort to give Sutton a 22-10 lead at the interval.

The second half began swiftly. Drybrook's Mitchell Baldwin made a searing 40-metre break before flanker Bailey Watts applied the coup de grâce. Lewis converted to make it 22-17. With momentum on their side, Drybrook surged forward again. Cai Rogers made a stunning break, and McTaggart received a yellow card for high contact. Drybrook capitalised, scoring twice in five minutes. Cai Roberts crossed to level the match at 22-22, and Mitchell Baldwin added another try. Lewis converted to take the lead 29-22.

In a parallel to the first half, Sutton responded. McTaggart returned just in time for another attacking lineout. Lennie completed his hat-trick. Though Bunting missed the conversion, the score stood at 29-27.



Moments later, the pendulum swung again. Bibby was shown a yellow card, meaning the influential centre would miss most of the remainder. Sutton were awarded a penalty from 45 metres, but Bunting's kick narrowly missed.

Drybrook came close again with a clever kick that exposed Sutton's cover, but the defence scrambled back just in time. However, the respite was brief. Replacement Ioan Jones strode over for the crucial score, converted again by the nerveless Lewis to make it 36-27.

Sutton fought to the final whistle but could not close the gap. Drybrook's celebrations began at the final whistle.

Though Sutton came up short, their performance capped a season of definite upward trajectory. Drybrook were worthy winners, concluding a triumphant campaign—one that may require a carpenter to extend their trophy cabinet.

Teams:

Sutton & Epsom:

Scott, Ghumra, Bibby, Bunting (capt.), Huie, Lennard, Findlay E, Johnson, Lennie, Boaden, Glanville, McTaggart, Rea, Jones, Hegarty.

Replacements: Hilton, Madadangoma, Duey, Tame, Davies, Nelson, Symonds.

Drybrook:

Lewis, Chappell, Price, Baldwin, Roberts, Morgan B, Rogers, Jelf, Addis, Morgan L, Moss, Watkins, Watts, Peaper, Bourne (capt.).

Replacements: Hale, Morgan C, Greenway W, Rowley, Tinker, Greenway R, Jones

Image credit: Iain Frazerr

Surrey Uni Research Exposes Toll of Controlling Coaching on Athletes' Health

Controlling coaching tactics shatter athletes' wellbeing, says new study

Controlling coaching styles disrupt athletes leaving them vulnerable to physical and psychological strain, according to a new study from the University of Surrey and the Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada.

This exposes a critical flaw in current sporting culture that prioritises results over athlete welfare. The research argues that coaches who micromanage and belittle athletes are fuelling both acute stress and burnout in their teams.

The study, published in *Motivation and Emotion*, tracked 72 student-athletes from Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada, using daily diaries to capture their experiences and heart rate variability (HRV) measurements to assess their stress responses. This combination of psychological and physiological data provides a comprehensive picture of how coaching behaviours seep into athletes' daily experiences, affecting their motivation and mental state. Researchers analysed how athletes perceived their coaches' behaviour and then linked these perceptions to both their psychological needs (satisfaction or frustration) and their psychobiological health.

Autonomy-supportive coaches – those encouraging choice and collaboration – boosted athletes' mental resilience. In contrast, controlling tactics like public criticism and arbitrary punishments spiked acute stress and eroded long-term wellbeing.

Dr Sebastiano Massaro, Associate Professor of Organizational Neuroscience and co-author of the study at the University of Surrey said:

"It's heart-breaking to see how these controlling tactics, often masked as 'discipline' or 'tough love', are fundamentally damaging our athletes."

Florence Jauvine, at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada, added:

"We're not just talking about hurt feelings; we're seeing measurable increases in stress and burnout that can have long-term consequences for their careers and their lives."

The research highlights a crucial counterpoint: when coaches support athletes' autonomy – giving them choices, acknowledging their perspectives, and encouraging their growth – it fuels their psychological needs, leading to greater engagement and acting as a buffer against burnout. The data shows a powerful connection between autonomy-supportive coaching, need satisfaction, and positive athlete outcomes.



Dr Sebastiano Massaro continued:

"We urge sporting organisations and governing bodies to implement urgent changes. This includes mandatory training for coaches at all levels, focusing on autonomy support and the detrimental effects of controlling behaviours. A shift in emphasis is required, moving away from a win-at-all-costs mentality towards a model that prioritises the holistic well-being of athletes."

Sutton & Epsom Secure Spot in the Final with Another 49-Point Display

Sutton & Epsom 49 - Harlow 19. Saturday 10th May

A great deal of credit must be given to Papa Johns for their contribution to grassroots sport. Sutton & Epsom have finally caught up with their soccer neighbours in Gander Green Lane and heartily embraced the competition. In 2022 Sutton United had a day out at Wembley for the 2022 EFL Trophy Final sponsored by the renowned pizza supplier. United lost 4-2 after extra time having been denied by Rotherham's 96th-minute equaliser in normal time. In contrast to the soccer competition that had all of the League One and League Two clubs plus 16 category one academy teams the take up for the rugby equivalent has been apathetic. A picture of the end of season landscape was provided via the unreliable format of a club survey and the inaugural year was greeted with cascade of walkovers and the competition remains somewhat unloved despite a plethora of trophies being available that are spread liberally across the levels.

This season Sutton could have felt unlucky having been given a rare away first round tie and being in a section of the draw that would lead to two further away rounds. But the appetite for this competition is akin to a super model dining on nouvelle cuisine in the 1970s. Grasshoppers RFC generously provided a walkover in Round 1. S&E advanced to the next round against London Irish Wild Geese for a game due to be played at Hazelwood. However, a pre-booked tournament meant that no pitches were available and the game was switched to Rugby Lane. A grateful Black & Whites scored a magnificent seven goals in a 49-33 triumph. Destined to be on the road again they were saved by the start of the cricket season and Crescent Farm was unavailable for Rugby and Sidcup RFC journeyed to Cheam. Another 49-point haul, including a hat trick from lock Ewan McTaggart, and a 49-27 win saw the hosts advanced into a semi-final against Harlow.

For devotees of Sutton Rugby Harlow RFC are a familiar foe having been promoted as champions of London 2 North they played S&E from 1993-4 to 2003-4. So it was a delight for the Rugby Lane crowd to welcome back the Essex club on a beautiful sunny afternoon with a place in the final the prize for the winners. Sutton & Epsom fielded a strong squad featuring 11 from 18 of the players with the most league appearances from this season. Liam Batty initiated proceedings for the visitors who played towards the Cabbage Patch. S&E opened brightly looking to employ their back division at every opportunity. An excellent 50/22 from Tom Lennard put the hosts in a prime attacking position. The ball safely secured from the throw it went to the wing where Archie Fitzgerald touched down. Unfortunately, the final pass was forward but fortunately play was brought back for an earlier misdemeanour. Sutton took a tapped penalty and Rob Hegarty muscled his way over from short-range. Freddy Bunting mastered the breeze for a 7-0 lead after five minutes.

The Black & Whites dropped the restart on their 22. Harlow took advantage and centre Casey Teague made a telling break with Brad Etherington in support the ball came to lock Bamidele Coker who lost control just short of glory. Denied the instant reply the visitors were forced back on the defensive. Captain Bunting turned down a kick at the sticks on the 22 in favour of the nudge to the corner. The Rams repelled the catch and drive and Sutton released their backs. A long miss pass by Bunting bounced favourably for Archie Fitzgerald, on a rare visit to the UK, to gather and score in the corner. Freddy Bunting made light of a challenging conversion for 14-0.

At the end of the first quarter the hosts were reduced to 14 men when Kyren Ghumra knocked on an attempted interception. It was a justifiable yellow as a wonderful floated pass on the Harlow 22 had created a fabulous opportunity to counter. Buoyed by the numerical advantage the Latton Park men went in search of their first score. Once more the ball was lost under the posts but, on this occasion, Harlow secured possession and a jubilant Matt Gleeson crossed the whitewash to score. Liam Batty impressively converted the winger's try to trail 7-14. However, Sutton soon restored their 14-point cushion. On the half-hour, having secured the line out ball, Freddy Bunting executed a set play to score. He added the extras to his try for a 21-7 lead.

If the home crowd thought this was going to be a pleasant processional bathed in sunshine they had a rude awakening. For the remainder of the first period the men from Essex gained the ascendancy. The back row triumvirate of Stalley, Hoole-Jackson & Etherington marauded forward. The centre combination of Teague and Lancaster made breaks and lock Bamidele Coker was



producing an eye-catching display. Running back a Sutton clearance from halfway forwards and backs combined in unison. For the third time a probable score was thwarted by a fumble in sight of the line. However, as per Sutton's opener, play was brought back for a penalty. Prop Mobashar Mahmood powered over the line for the visitor's second try. Liam Batty made it 14-21 with an excellent kick.

With the first period approaching time added on the men in green made a stunning break from halfway deep into the Black & Whites 22 as the hosts scrambled in defence. In fact, S&E were saved when the play was interrupted by their physio treating an injured player who was in the path of the attack. Play was brought back for a knock on and a Harlow scrum. Brad Etherington picked up from a retreating pack and carried it forward for his back row comrade Dale Stalley to score. The conversion just drifted by the posts but the game was well poised with Sutton & Epsom leading 21-19. The first half concluded with Harlow on the front foot and the result very much in the balance.

The second half began with two key incidents, which on reflection, proved to be most significant for the final outcome and shifted the momentum in this encounter. In the first minute Kyren Ghumra made amends for his earlier botched interception by picking off a pass and sauntering in from forty metres. The Bunting boot made it 28-19. That most demoralising form of try to concede was followed moments later by a yellow card awarded against Harlow. The team of three showing consistency penalised a knock on that occurred whilst attempting to cut out a Sutton pass. Down to 14 the visitors were immediately punished. The penalty was kicked to the corner, the catch and drive was clinically executed as Dan Jones was ushered over the line for S&E's fifth try of the afternoon. Another immaculate conversion from the flank made it 35-19 and a game that was on a knife-edge had swung violently in favour of the hosts.

In addition, the Sutton defence was much improved in the second period as the organisation and alignment that had become an encouraging feature of the recent league campaign was present once more. Indeed the Black & Whites were to keep a clean slate in the second half. Another familiar feature, the impressive form of Adam Bibby, became evident the longer the game continued. His balanced running, gliding through the defence and bouncing off would-be tacklers combined with selfless passing gave the S&E attack another dimension. With the numerical advantage the Surrey men could have added three more scores. Firstly, they failed to pass the ball down the line where an eager Archie

Fitzgerald would have scored. Secondly, Kyren Ghumra was held up over the line by tenacious tackling. Finally, and most unexpectedly, Adam Bibby lost control of the ball under the posts in the act of scoring.

The dynamic Dale Stalley lifted the siege with a barnstorming break from the scrum that followed the Bibby boob. The flanker exploded down the paddock and reached halfway leaving a poleaxed Sam Palombo in his wake. The unfortunate 15 was ushered off the pitch to take no further part in the contest. Restored to their full complement the Rams tried to get back into the match. They were aided by a flurry of penalties as they pressed hard for a morale-boosting score. The Black & Whites defence was now far more resolute and cussed resilience eventually saw them earn a turnover penalty near their line.

As the match continued the Essex team were not helped by injuries as key performers were replaced. The heat, the situation and the scoreboard made the game become increasingly scrappy. With the final whistle approaching the Rugby Lane team added two more goals to their ledger. Good fortune favoured the hosts as a probing kick bounced cruelly away from the cover and arrived in the hands of Josh Rea who triumphantly strode over. The Captain made it 42-19. Then Sutton maintained their numerical novelty of scoring 49 points in every round. A penalty awarded for a scrum infringement on halfway was kicked to the 22. Tom Lennard made the telling break from ten and Archie Fitzgerald, with his dubious hair colouring, collected his second try. Freddy Bunting maintained his 100% conversion record for the day, and in the competition, as his personal tally rose to 19 points and his side advanced to 49-19. Soon after the referee concluded proceedings.

After a thoroughly entertaining match Sutton & Epsom had earned their place in the Papa Johns Men's Regional 2 South Plate Final. The game had started with a Sutton swagger, no doubt the result of two comprehensive victories in earlier rounds, but Harlow had shown enough intent to indicate to the neutral observer that this might not be an easy afternoon for the hosts. Harlow hit back and by the break were more than in contention as only an errant conversion separated the teams at 21-19. However, the Black & Whites scored 28 unanswered points in the second half to gain the glory of a place in the final. That match will take place on Saturday 17th May at Shaftesbury Park. This fine facility is familiar to S&E as it was a venue during their National 2 season being the home of Dings Crusaders in Bristol. Their Plate Final will be one of four matches that afternoon as a festival of club rugby starts at 11am. The Sutton charabancs will not be departing at breakfast but at a more polite time of midday as their game against Drybrook is the last one on the menu at 5pm. The West Country outfit were Sutton's first ever Papa Johns opponent in 2023. On April Fool's Day the Mannings Ground men left Rugby Lane 31-0 winners so the 2025 Sutton vintage will be keen to make amends this Saturday.

Sutton & Epsom: Palombo, Fitzgerald, Bibby, Bunting ©, Ghumra, Lennard, Lovatt, Lennie, Howes, Johnson, Glanville, McTaggart, Rea, Jones & Hegarty.



Replacements: Madadangoma, Duey, Davies, Davis, Williams & Nelson.

Harlow: Creasey, Hunter, Lancaster, Teague, Gleeson, Batty, Enyon R., Mahmood, Davies, King, Coker, Garner, Stalley, Hoole-Jackson & Etherington ©.

Replacements: Alagoz, Clark, Terrington, Enyon O., Wright & Rundall.

Image credits: Robin Kennedy

Miller hat-trick saves Epsom and Ewell FC

Spelthorne Sports 1-4 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League – Premier Division South. Saturday 29th March.

It's like London buses; you wait eight matches for a win and then along come two at once! The same story could be applied to our little winger Luke Miller, who had scored 36 goals for our club previously, but not a single one since September, and yet his well taken second half hat trick was enough to break a fairly weak Spelthorne resistance as we won at the Sports Club by four goals to one, confirming our mathematical escape from relegation this season.

Maybe unsurprisingly, we stuck with an unchanged starting eleven for our meeting with the club at the foot of the League in the hope that momentum gained in Tuesday's win over Corinthian-Casuals would continue. Going into this contest we knew that a win would guarantee our survival at Step Five for 2025/26, but anything less would leave us looking over our shoulders at the fast improving Balham team.

We got off to a fine start at the Spelthorne Sports Club; a venue we have never lost at in five previous visits, and were ahead as early as the seventh minute after some early pressure led to the ball being passed around on the edge of the Spelthorne Sports penalty area and out of nowhere, Brendan Murphy-McVey struck a shot across home keeper Aaron Etukado with the outside of his left foot. It was a cultured and clinical finish and was also our new man's first goal for the club, having been unfortunate when hitting the post four days previously.

The home side were forced into an early substitution due to injury and after Jason Bloor was brought down on the edge of the area, Murphy-McVey's strike forced Etukado into a low save. Bloor sent a strike over the bar from distance and Toby Young headed wide from a deep Miller free kick. It was interesting to see the Spelthorne number ten Glenn Yala stumble in the penalty area and then receive a yellow card for simulation which looked harsh, before a card was issued in the direction of our bench for something that was said. Just before half time Ethan Nelson-Roberts saw his shot take a heavy deflection wide and from the corner Anthony Nazareth headed wide at the far post.

As the players went off at half time there was only really one team in it, but a substitution at the break worked instantly as Oliver Jovanovic came on and with just 20 seconds having elapsed, he tried his luck with the breeze now in his favour and it flew right into the top corner, leaving Sami Nabbad helpless.

A week or two ago this might have caused us to wobble, but the home side rarely challenged and we soon picked up where we had left off in the first half. There was time to see Craig Dundas trying a cheeky throw in off the back of a retreating opponent in an attempt to get the ball straight back, but he was pulled up for the foul throw! However, it didn't take much time before we restored our lead and it arguably came from an unlikely source. Miller had missed three good opportunities against Casuals on Tuesday and hadn't troubled the scorers for a few months, but this time he was far more clinical and when he ran on to Ethan Brazier's great pass over the top of a static defence, he ran in on goal before cheekily flicking the ball, again with the outside of his foot like Murphy-McVey had, to send the ball beyond Etukado's left hand and into the far corner of the net in the 64th minute.

We then posed a tricky problem for the referee when substitute Kionte Gillfillian-Waul made good ground on the left before colliding with the keeper. It wasn't clear to see who was at fault here, but despite our appeals, the man in black waved away the penalty appeals. Again though, it didn't matter as we made the game safe in the 80th minute. This time Gillfillian-Waul did well down the right flank and his pull back enabled Adam Green to strike a low shot at goal from just outside the area. Etukado got down to make the save, but couldn't hold on and Miller was there at the far post to firstly win the ball off a defender before tucking it in from a narrow angle just a couple of yards out.

Etukado was badly injured in making the save and required treatment for a lower leg injury before being replaced in some pain. This required the home side to throw in an outfield player and as they had used all their substitutes by then, they were also down to ten men as a result. I thought the same was going to happen to our Captain Green in the 89th minute after he needed treatment, as we had also used our subs by then, but he recovered to rejoin the action and Miller wrapped things up in the third minute of injury time with a cheeky lob from an angle, only twelve yards out, that went in off the far post to give him his third hat



trick in Epsom colours, and his first one away from home after registering triples against Mile Oak and Billingshurst, both at our temporary home ground of Fetcham Grove in 2021/22.

Spelthorne will now take a season or more out in Division One of the Combined Counties League, having fallen away quite badly this season, while Corinthian-Casuals will surely dispense of their Manager at season's end having just about survived at this level, when they will have been hoping to bounce straight back. What I will say in our favour is that these two wins were pivotal and you can only beat who is in front of you. We'll get a better idea of whether we have really turned the corner on Tuesday against in-form Balham, but either way, assessing the performance is not really important right now; it was all about the points, and as it was at the end of last season we have made it count just when we needed to. The same could also be applied to Miller, who now jumps five places on our Club Hall of Fame list to 42nd after not moving for such a long time. I think he would agree, it was overdue!

Epsom & Ewell: Sami Nabbad, Ethan Brazier, Ethan Nelson-Roberts, Adam Green (c), Toby Young, Anthony Nazareth, Luke Miller, Niall Stillwell, Craig Dundas, Brendan Murphy-McVey, Jason Bloor

Subs: Kionte Gillfillian-Waul for Stillwell (63), Ali Fofahan for Bloor (75), Jack Torbett for Murphy-McVey (83), Stefan Aiwone for Nelson-Roberts (85), Nicolas Bostan for Brazier (85)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Epsom & Ewell athletics legend remembered

Remembering Don Turner: A Legend in Local Athletics

Epsom and Ewell's athletics community is mourning the loss of **Don Turner**, who passed away on Sunday, 9 March. A dedicated member of **Epsom and Ewell Harriers** for an incredible 70 years, Don was not only an accomplished athlete but also a respected official and administrator who left an indelible mark on the sport, both locally and nationally.

Don's career in athletics was nothing short of remarkable. An international-standard distance runner, he completed 65 marathons, but his true talent shone in even longer races. He broke the world record for a six-hour track run in challenging conditions at Stompond Lane, won the grueling Isle of Man TT course race twice, and was part of a Surrey trio who dominated the 1962 Comrades Marathon in South Africa, finishing within the top four.

His dedication to the sport extended far beyond competing. Don was a pillar of athletics officiating, holding key roles within Epsom and Ewell Harriers, Surrey Athletics, the South of England AA, and South of the Thames Cross Country Association. His expertise in timekeeping was widely recognized, and he became a mentor to many officials in the region.

A true pioneer in race technology, Don played a crucial role in introducing photofinish techniques in an era when timing relied on manual stopwatches and wet film processing. He was a key figure in international athletics, including officiating at the prestigious Crystal Palace events and working with Seiko at the Barcelona Olympics test event in 1991.

Perhaps one of his most well-known contributions was his involvement in the founding of the London Marathon in 1981, working alongside Chris Brasher and John Disley to organize the race's finish and timekeeping. Yet, despite these high-profile roles, Don remained dedicated to grassroots athletics. Well into his 80s, he could be found officiating at local youth competitions, including the Ebbisham League at Ewell Track.

Helen Maguire, MP for Epsom and Ewell and an Epsom and Ewell Harriers runner, paid tribute to Don's immense contribution:

"Don officiated in many a race I've taken part in during my 14 years running for Epsom & Ewell Harriers. Don also helped start the London Marathon alongside Chris Brasher in 1981. He lived in Stoneleigh. His contribution to the sport of running has been enormous and he will not be forgotten. Thanks, Don, for everything you have done for the sport."

A Club with a Rich Heritage

Don Turner's legacy will live on through Epsom and Ewell Harriers, one of the oldest and most successful athletics clubs in Surrey. With a membership of approximately 250 athletes of all ages and abilities, the club competes in a range of track and field, cross country, and road running events at regional, national, and even international levels.

The club's facilities include a six-lane track and provisions for high jump, long jump, pole vault, hammer, discus, and javelin training. It is a strong competitor in the Surrey Cross Country leagues, Area Cross Country Championships, and road running



events. Additionally, the club actively supports and encourages coaching and officiating qualifications among its members.

Epsom and Ewell Harriers also play a vital role in the local running community, including their well-established link with Nonsuch parkrun, where they frequently provide volunteer support. As a registered charity (number 1187959), the club continues to promote athletics and nurture future generations of athletes.

Don Turner's passing marks the end of an era for Epsom and Ewell athletics. He will be remembered not just for his achievements and contributions but for his unwavering passion and generosity in supporting the sport at every level. The athletics community will deeply miss him, but his legacy will continue to inspire for years to come.

Image courtesy England Athletics

Epsom and Ewell FC beat landlords

Corinthian-Casuals 1-2 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League – Premier Division South. Tuesday 25th March 2025

It could be argued that our opponents were the ideal team to play as they had not won any of their last 15 League matches dating back to November, but we of course went into this match on a nine match losing run of our own; our worst run since the relegation season of 2003/04, (when we went down with just one point fewer than Corinthian-Casuals!) so nothing was ever going to be straightforward in our battle to escape relegation, which was brought into sharp focus by our 3-2 defeat to Balham on Saturday.

Although Dundas was technically in charge yesterday, he continued his role up front, so the bulk of the match decisions were in the hands of Max Johnson and the rest of the Coaching team. It could therefore be argued that there was not a lot of difference, but our performance in this match was more aggressive and attacking than we had been in recent matches.

We made a couple of personnel changes from Saturday's match. Former Casual Sami Nabbad came in between the posts against his old club while Ethan Brazier returned to the starting eleven, resulting in Niall Stillwell moving forward into a midfield role in place of the absent Sean-Michael Anderson.

It was clear from the opening exchanges that this was going to be a more open encounter. Both sides fired early sighters just wide of the goal and Nabbad had to come out smartly to head clear. Young gave away a foul out on the touchline but the free kick was claimed by Nabbad as the "home" team shaded the early possession. As the half went on though, we began to gain a foothold in the match. The 44 year old Dundas set a fine example by chasing down a lost cause and retrieved the ball just before it went out of play, which led to a shot from Brendan Murphy-McVey that smacked against Murillo Bernardes' left hand post with a defender just preventing Jason Bloor from knocking the rebound into an empty net.

Adam Green tried his luck from distance with Bernardes turning the ball around the post before Murphy-McVey saw his shot flick up off a defender, requiring an acrobatic save from the keeper to claw the ball away. The best chance of the half came for us in the 45th minute when good pressure from Dundas and Green allowed Luke Miller to have a clear shot at goal from fifteen yards, but he dragged the shot horribly across goal when he should at least have hit the target. Still, as the half time whistle blew, we appeared to be in the ascendancy, despite the goalless scoreline.

Of course this counts for little as we found out three days previously if you don't sustain things in the second half and in the 48th minute we were behind after Ben Checklit drilled a low shot across Nabbad into the far corner from just inside the penalty area to put us in a difficult situation. We were going to have to come from behind to win for the first time since winning at Phoenix Sports in an August F.A. Cup tie.

It is sometimes easy as a supporter to focus on your own club's shortcomings on the field of play without realising that other clubs have their own issues too. For example, our nine match losing run had been underlined by our inability to hold onto a lead against Balham. However, Casuals had concerns of their own, having failed to win for so long themselves and from the point when they took the lead, they started to exhibit the same signs that we had been guilty of so recently. A defensive error let Miller in on goal just four minutes after we had conceded, but with just Bernardes to beat, he lifted his shot over the bar from just twelve yards.

Then in the 57th minute came the turning point in the match as a hopeful ball forward took a very solid bounce and completely deceived Bernardes who could only get a faint glove on the ball, enabling Bloor to continue the run he made and nod the ball into the empty net from eight yards! It was a massive lifeline and we had taken it to level the scores.

Seven minutes later it was Bloor again who received a ball on the left and as he cut in, he was brought down in the penalty area by Marcus Dos Santos who then received a second yellow card for his foul. Ironically, their powerhouse midfielder will now be



suspended for their next fixture against.... Balham! Adam Green tucked away the penalty in the 65th minute and we had a lead. In fact, we had turned the match around in a ten minute spell, much the same as Balham had done to us on Saturday, but could we hold on?

Against ten men it should have been fairly straightforward to manage the game, but it was never going to be quite that simple as our opponents began to push forward in search of an equaliser. Our bench cleverly broke up any momentum with some regular substitutions during this period with Ali Fofahan, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Stefan Aiwone, Callum Wilson and Nicolas Bostan all joining the action over the next twenty minutes and it was interesting to see Wilson stationed up front as we tried to relieve any pressure with a clearance in his direction, although we kept trying to push forward in this match instead of sitting back and Miller sliced a shot wide in the 70th minute before his pull back from the touchline was cleared just ahead of the incoming Green.

At the other end Toby Young made a great defensive block but we looked dangerous going forward and Fofahan saw his shot turned around the post, before receiving a superb crossfield ball from Miller a couple of minutes later, which really should have brought success, especially when he had done the hard work to cut inside the defender, but with just the keeper to beat, he put the ball over the bar from ten yards.

Nabbad had to be alert to block a shot at the near post, but the final whistle blew soon after and celebrations commenced. Although we are not mathematically safe yet, the relief was everywhere to see and the exuberance was justified on this occasion. We now sit four points clear of Balham who have just two matches remaining and also now sit above Chipstead with a better goal difference. We can guarantee safety with a win at bottom club Spelthorne Sports on Saturday, or with a win for Corinthian-Casuals over Balham on Saturday and failing both of those outcomes we still have three more fixtures to play. We're almost there now and for the first time in a while we have momentum; one of the most important things to possess in any sport. New Manager bounce? It definitely exists!

Epsom & Ewell: Sami Nabbad, Ethan Brazier, Ethan Nelson-Roberts, Adam Green (c), Toby Young, Anthony Nazareth, Luke Miller, Niall Stillwell, Craig Dundas, Brendan Murphy-McVey, Jason Bloor

Subs: Ali Fofahan for Murphy-McVey (66), Kionte Gillfillian-Waul for Bloor (68), Stefan Aiwone for Dundas (78), Callum Wilson for Nelson-Roberts (79), Nicolas Bostan for Brazier (87)

Anyone for free Summer tennis in Epsom and Ewell?

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will provide free morning tennis sessions in all council-owned tennis courts across the borough this summer, between 22 July and 29 August 2025. The decision, made by the Environment Committee last week, follows a similar initiative which took place last year. In addition to the summer program, starting April 1 residents can enjoy free Sunday morning sessions at Gibraltar and Poole Road Recreation Grounds. The council already offers two hours of free, bookable tennis sessions at courts every weekend throughout the year.

Epsom & Ewell moved to a pay-to-play model for tennis last year. The scheme aims to ensure that council tennis courts are well-maintained as well as providing funding for future improvements. Maintenance carried out so far includes clearing and treating all courts for moss; improved signage; new court-side benches at Poole Road and Auriol Park; and installing windbreakers at Court Recreation Ground, Gibraltar Recreation Ground and Poole Road. New laser line marking at Alexandra Park will take place later this year.

Councillor Liz Frost, Chair of the Environment Committee, commented: "We were really pleased with how well received the free tennis sessions were last summer and we're very happy to be able to offer them again. They provide a great opportunity to give a tennis a try for free - whether you are a complete beginner, haven't played for a few years, or just want to get some extra practise in.

"I hope residents will take advantage of the various free sessions on offer now and this summer. Booking details are available on the council's website."

Court sessions are available to book online 24 hours a day on the ClubSpark website, and paid coaching sessions are also available to book at Court Recreation Ground, Alexandra Park and Auriol Park: Find & book a tennis court near you | LTA.

Free summer tennis sessions are available up to midday (12 noon) from 22 July 2025 to 29 August 2025.

To take advantage of the free tennis offer, individuals must first register with ClubSpark and then use the platform to book their free sessions.



In addition to the free morning sessions available in the summer, free sessions are available year-round at the following times:

- Alexandra Park
 - Saturday: 9am-10am
 - Saturday: 10am-11am, this session is run by a coach or volunteer
- Auriol Park
 - Saturday: 9am-10am
 - Saturday: 10am-11am, this session is run by a coach or volunteer
- Court Recreation Ground
 - Saturday: 10am – 11am
 - Sunday: 10am-11am, this session is run by a coach or volunteer
- Gibraltar Recreation Ground
 - Saturday: 9am – 11am
 - Sunday: 9am – 11am
- Poole Road
 - Saturday: 9am – 11am
 - Sunday: 9am – 11am

Epsom break Weybridge Reeds

Reeds Weybridge 28 Sutton & Epsom RFC 33. Saturday 22nd March.

The denouement of the campaign is rather lacking in a crescendo this season. This was the penultimate Saturday and it will be followed by yet another tedious blank Saturday. No doubt the boffins would argue that clubs need a rest before the frantic finale.

When these two teams met in December the nation was mopping up after Storm Darragh and everyone was grateful to avoid a postponement. A trio of Sutton tries edged out the visitors in a keenly contested match that ended 17-11. With Sutton lying fifth in the table and Reeds only a place below, expectations were for another even encounter. The crowd was not disappointed as Sutton & Epsom edged a game of fluctuating fortunes by 33-28.

Despite an ominous roll of thunder whilst the teams warmed up, the match was played on a dry afternoon on a very firm surface. The Whiteley Village location has arguably the most significantly advantageous slope in the league. Sutton kicked off with the advantage not only of topography but also the breeze.

The visitors started well, dominating possession in the opposition 22, running through their patterns. After a couple of penalties the pressure told as prop Callum Gibson forced his way over in the third minute for the opening try. Freddy Bunting converted for a 7-0 lead.

Reeds immediately illustrated the attacking potential of their illustrious back division as they ran back a kick and won a penalty. The chance to get on the scoreboard after winning the line out was squandered by a poor pass as the low ball was kicked through and a grateful S&E touched down for a drop out.

Five minutes later that attacking threat bore fruit with a sumptuous score from 40 metres out. Matt Stevenson was put into space by an initial break and finished with élan as he left defenders floundering in his wake. Joshua Clark converted to level the scores at 7-7.

The Black & Whites returned to attack mode aided by a penalty kicked into the corner. Yet again the hosts demonstrated not only



superb defensive organisation but also cussed tenacity as Sutton launched wave after wave of attacks. Dan Jones was halted by a high tackle near the line. The result was a penalty and hooker Rhys Day getting ten minutes off for bad behaviour. From the penalty Sutton forced their way over and their leading try scorer Dan Jones got his rewards. Freddy Bunting added the easy extras to restore the lead with a 14-7 advantage near the end of the first quarter.

Everything was in Sutton's favour — the slope, the breeze, and now the numerical advantage. However, they failed to convert pressure and a spirited Reeds continued to look to unleash their backs at every opportunity. The quality of the visitors' play also deteriorated. They were held up over the line, they opted to kick to the corner and kicked it dead and were frustrated.

After the half-hour mark Matt Whitaker replaced Ben Tame as the back row reorganised to accommodate the talismanic Number 8. The malaise spread to the decision-making. A fatal failure of risk assessment saw a clearance from the 22 declined in favour of running the ball. Optimist tackled, penalty gifted and try conceded. The ruthless Reeds attack took the opportunity as prop Kerran Beavis muscled his way over. Despite the conversion failing the hosts only trailed 12-14.

A two-point advantage with less than ten minutes remaining in the first half was not only insignificant but also well below par for this particular location. Sutton urgency began to look like desperation as another attempt to counter from their 22 ended with poor passing. The situation deteriorated as Captain Bunting was given a yellow for a collision in the centres. Joshua Clark stepped up and knocked over the subsequent penalty for a 15-14 lead.

As the travelling support from Rugby Lane pondered how it had gone so heinously awry they were served up one final unamusing amuse bouche before the break. They were awarded a penalty in front of the posts on the 22. Declining a simple three points to retake the lead when playing with 14 they opted to kick to the corner. Their bearings were faulty as the ball was kicked dead.

The situation could have swiftly turned from trying to terminal as a Reeds counter threatened to score. Small mercies for the visitors as Mr Lipetz-Robic blew his whistle to end the half with Reeds Weybridge 15-14 up.

At the break the hosts held the advantage not only on the scoreboard but also on the pitch with favourable conditions, a man advantage and a back division that was on song. It was going to be an uphill struggle for Sutton & Epsom in every sense of the phrase. Their defence would have to be at its best and they would have to find a tactical approach to maximise their strengths whilst mitigating the slope.

Thomas Boaden replaced Dan Johnson in the visitors' front row but the hosts turned the screw at the start of the second half. A flurry of penalties was followed by a warning to the Black & Whites as they were forced back in their 22. With a sense of inevitability a penalty was kicked to the corner and the Whiteley Village pack exploited the lineout to usher over lock Cameron Goodwin for their third try of the afternoon. Clark's conversion failed but Reeds led 20-14.

Sutton regained possession at the restart and won a penalty that they advanced deep into the enemy 22. This signalled the moment that veteran Matt Whitaker began to impose his considerable talent on the afternoon's proceedings. Playing his 201st game with all the hunger of his first he scored his 118th try — a typically abrasive carry leaving tacklers hanging off his powerful frame. Freddy Bunting inched Sutton ahead by 21-20.

The Black & Whites had appreciated that the road to glory on this afternoon would be on a path trod by their pack. The trio of Whitaker, Lennie and Gibson were at the forefront of a mighty effort to negate the slope as they carried relentlessly, compiling impressive statistics for yardage gained.

However, the quality back play of the hosts would remain a constant threat. Ten minutes later the partisan crowd were raising their glasses to salute their bonus point score as Reeds regained the lead. Once more it was superb back play with the excellent Will Jones at 15 creating the opening for replacement Nick Brown to score. It was advantage Reeds as they led 25-21.

In this fluctuating fixture the crowd did not have to wait long for another twist. Within five minutes S&E had their bonus point for a fourth try and had taken back the lead. Playing with renewed vigour and belief they demonstrated impressive efficiency as the pack turned pressure into points in the 22 with Rob Hegarty being the beneficiary on this occasion. The conversion drifted wide as the Rugby Lane team led by a solitary point 26-25 as the referee informed the protagonists that they had 15 left to play.

The visitors' chances were dealt a blow at the restart as Thomas Boaden was issued a yellow and Sutton again had to play with 14. The hosts tried desperately to make the advantage count. The Black & White line held, repelling a 5-metre lineout as they kept the ball with their tireless pack.

With five minutes remaining Reeds Weybridge were awarded a penalty. Joshua Clark stepped up and calmly bisected the uprights from 45 metres for a 28-26 lead.

As the match entered time added on the referee intervened once more to flourish a yellow card. A high tackle on Dan Jones meant that the hosts would finish the match a man down.



A minute later S&E had scored. Demonstrating superb control from a lineout, first Matt Whitaker and then Sam Lennie carried towards the line. The ball was spun wide to prop Callum Gibson who was in splendid isolation. He ran home his second try of the afternoon, concluding with a celebratory dive that was less Tom Daley and more of a belly flop. Freddy Bunting added the vital extras for 33-28, meaning Reeds required a try to draw or a goal to win.

Almost inevitably Sutton conceded a penalty at the restart to ensure high anxiety for the conclusion. Penalties followed as the ball advanced to the 22. The hosts declined the kick to the corner and tapped from a central position, no doubt searching for a try that would have a more advantageous position for the conversion.

The S&E defence stood strong until the hosts knocked on and from the scrum they dispatched the ball into the neighbouring pitch for a hard fought win.

The season concludes on Saturday April 5th as the Black & Whites head to Horn Park where Old Colfeians will no doubt be a much improved outfit to the one that lost 50-7 on the opening day of the season. Whilst Sutton were winning in Whiteley Village the Old Boys had a significant 31-17 win at Gravesend that secured their Level status.

Sutton & Epsom:

Findlay, Nelson, Bibby, Bunting ©, Scott, Lennard, Munford, Johnson, Lennie, Gibson, McTaggart, Glanville, Tame, Jones & Hegarty.

Replacements: Boaden, Whitaker & Rea.

Reeds Weybridge:

Jones, Maitland, Stevenson, Forbes, Bennett, J. Clark, Beavis, R. Day, Agyapong-Ntrah, Goodwin, Finn, Ewington, Wastie & Corner.

Replacements: Howe, McKinley & Brown.