

Battling Beckenham Take Sutton & Epsom RFC The Full Distance

27 October 2025



Sutton & Epsom 22 Beckenham 19. Saturday 25th October.

This fixture is rapidly gaining a reputation for fabulous finishes. Two seasons ago the visitors triumphed 42-41 on a sweltering afternoon as they watched Freddy Bunting's last-moment touchline penalty from halfway miss by millimetres. Last time the hosts prevailed 20-19 when Lewis Bunton's last-ditch drop kick failed in direction and altitude. On Saturday in excess of 250 avaricious spectators gathered expecting more drama and they were not disappointed as **Tom Lennard's** last kick of the game earned Sutton a 22-19 triumph.

An ominous slate-grey sky punctuated by a resplendent rainbow hung over the clubhouse environs. Fortuitously, the match avoided the predicted precipitation but the wind was a constant hindrance to the place-kickers. Sutton welcomed back most of their society absentees. In contrast Beckenham arrived in reduced circumstances, not only minus their second-row pairing but also their centre combination from Round 6. The Kent club kicked off and the first opportunity was engineered by S&E. A well-angled kick by **Tom Lennard** was improved by **Kyren Ghumra's** chase and charge down. **Sam Lennie** dragged the scrambling defender into touch and the Black & Whites had a five-metre attacking lineout within five minutes of play. All seemed set for an imperious catch-and-drive try but a shrill blast from the whistle indicated an infraction enabling Beckenham to have the first scrum of the afternoon. A penalty ensued and the visitors cleared their lines.

After ten minutes Beckenham enjoyed a period of total domination. The Sutton & Epsom defence was exceptional against robust carrying, grubber kicks and jinking backs. Unfortunately for the Black & Whites it ended like the Alamo rather than Mafeking. The ten-minute onslaught concluded with **George Bunton** squeezing into the corner. The fraternal failure to add the extras by **Lewis Bunton** did not diminish Beckenham's deserved 5-0 lead nearing the end of the first quarter. Moments later, misfortune struck the visitors as centre **Matt Lovell** was forced off through injury, stretching their resources even further in that position as winger **Fran Pennacchia** stepped up to the challenge.

Sutton had a golden opportunity to open their account with another five-metre line. It was overthrown and Beckenham countered through their excellent flanker **Kareem Swandells** as he motored towards halfway. A couple of passes later **George Bunton** was in possession, he chipped ahead, re-gathered the ball and sauntered in under the posts. It was a sensational score as the recent returnee from the Northeast added his second try. A Beckenham baritone boomed: "Sutton supporters, where were you when the best try was scored on your ground?" **Lewis Bunton** put the cherry on the Bunton family celebratory cake with the simple kick for an impressive 12-0 lead.

The Balmoral Avenue boys pressed on and **Gareth O'Brien** was forced to touch down and then centre **Greg Lawlor** came close to scoring on the half hour. Finally, Sutton enjoyed some possession and engineered another five-metre chance. Despite advancing towards glory, prop **Alex Mount** was held up over the line. The first period was entering its final moments of regulation time. Yet another five-metre attempt came up short but the hosts had the consolation of a penalty. The forwards took control and, *mirabile dictu*, **Alex Mount** scored. **Tom Lennard** added the conversion for 7-12. The first half had endured multiple interruptions and belatedly concluded after almost fifty minutes of breathless entertainment with Beckenham leading 12-7.

Beckenham were good value for their interval advantage. They had monopolised territory and possession with back-row forwards **Kareem Swandells**, **Tom Ward** and captain **Andrew Knowles** in superb form and winger **Kyrene Bennett** a constant threat. Their swarming defence had denied Sutton time and space, neutering the threat of the home backs. S&E had been remarkably resilient in defence and had fashioned multiple opportunities from attacking lineouts. The final outcome was still very much in the balance and another nail-biting finale looked probable.

The start of the second half made onlookers recall Laurel & Hardy, the Keystone Cops and Fred Karno's Army. **Rob Hegarty** was fortunately placed to purloin the ball on halfway. He walked back to connect with support but it was dislodged and kicked ahead. Sutton were in full retreat as Beckenham sprinted with optimism to the corner. The ball rolled free behind the S&E line and **Kyren Ghumra** decided to counter. He narrowly evaded a couple of tackles in his lateral run before seeking the far touch. His kick hit the upright and went straight to the opposition. The visitors added to the pandemonium by dropping the ball with the line at their mercy. Encouraged by that mayhem, moments later, number 8 **Andrew Knowles** kicked ahead once more and nearly manufactured a try.

Sutton were desperate for a modicum of control and a period of sustained pressure. After some encouraging phases fifteen minutes into the half they were awarded a kickable penalty. Despite trailing by only five points they opted for yet another attacking lineout. The mountainous **McTaggart** rose to claim the ball. The forwards rolled ever onwards towards the uprights. The ever-alert scrum-half **Laurence Wise** took the ball, dummied and reached for the line for a try. **Tom**

Lennard's kick failed but Sutton were level at 12-12.

Tom Boaden came on to replace try-scorer **Alex Mount** in the front row with the final quarter approaching. Beckenham responded positively to the setback and twice were frustrated by errant handling deep in the Sutton 22 as they put the hosts under the cosh. The exemplary Black & White defence spread across the park, tackled tenaciously and refused to take a step backwards. Having weathered the storm it was the Surrey side that secured the lead with their next visit to the Kent half. Another penalty was kicked to the 22. After the frustrations of earlier lineouts what followed was a catch and drive of pure perfection and the forwards marched over the line from 15 metres with hooker **Sam Lennie** scoring. The **Tom Lennard** conversion followed such a bizarre path that the ball might have been remotely controlled as it meandered over the posts for a 19-12 lead.

With ten minutes remaining referee **Ruben Gobregts** issued a yellow card to reduce Beckenham to 14 men. Boosted by their numerical superiority Sutton looked to be in control and a bonus-point try looked more likely than an equalising score from Beckenham. However, captain **Andrew Knowles** had other ideas as he stole the ball near halfway. His kick ahead was weighted to perfection to force a drop out. The visitors now flung themselves into attack. Penalties followed and **Gareth O'Brien** was shown a yellow to make it 14 v 14. From close range **Rimarni Richards** powered over the line, as is his wont at Rugby Lane, having scored last season to add to the brace he scored two years ago. The conversion made it 19-19 with the crowd expecting yet more drama.

For the third season on the trot it came down to the last kick of the game. This time it was the boot of **Tom Lennard**. Having removed his headgear, he steadied himself and sent the ball through the uprights to secure a 22-19 victory. It was a pulsating affair that could have gone either way and arguably a draw would have been the fairest outcome. Beckenham, with their back row in their vanguard, had been superb. Equally, Sutton's superb number 8 **Rob Hegarty** carried courageously in adversity in a victory built on defensive durability and self-belief.

Both teams will be glad that next Saturday is a rest weekend before league hostilities resume on Saturday 8 November when Sutton visit Battersea Ironsides at their famous facility with canine connotations.

Sutton & Epsom: O'Brien, Benson, Rea, Bibby, Ghumra, Lennard, Wise, Johnson, Lennie, Mount, McTaggart (c), Duey, Tame, Jones & Hegarty.

Replacements: Boaden, Butt & Elliott.

Beckenham: Bunton G., Pennacchia, Lovell, Lawlor, Bennett, Bunton L., Gurney, Baker, Aoke-Tiamu, Richards, Moran, Tookey, Swandells, Ward & Knowles (c).

Replacements: Brown, Willden & Charles.

John Croysdill

Image from a previous fixture. - credit Robin Kennedy

Epsom and Ewell Harriers return with gold aplenty

27 October 2025



A number of **Epsom & Ewell Harriers** travelled to the beautiful island of Madeira for the European Masters Athletics Championships and returned with a big haul of medals. In total, Harriers athletes brought home seven gold and three silver medals to help GB to its most successful ever championships as the team topped the medal table with 129 gold medals, 20 clear of Germany with France a long way back in third place on 65 golds.

Most of the medals were won in the sprints. Helen Godsell claimed three golds and a silver in the W70 100m, 200m and relays while Anne Nelson was also part of the winning W70 4x100m team. Lisa Boland almost matched Helen with another 100m / 200m double, winning the 200m in a W40 British record of 25.27 seconds and anchoring the W40 team to silver in the sprint relay.

Steve Winder had a busy championships running a total of 37K across four events and capped off an exciting and enjoyable championships with an individual silver and team gold in the M50 Half Marathon on the final day.

Well done to all the Harriers and GB athletes on a memorable championships.

See below for a summary of E&E results and full results here:

<https://data.opentrack.run/en-gb/x/2025/PRT/emacs/>

Helen Godsell W70:

□ 100m 15.34

□ 200m 32.29 (31.94 in Heat)

□ 4x100m GB Team 1st

□ Mixed 4x400m GB Team 2nd

Anne Nelson W70:
100m 6th Final 17.66 (17.48 in Heat)
200m 5th Heat 2 37.31
□ 4x100m GB Team 1st

Stacey Gonzalez W50:
Hammer Throw 10th 36.62
Shot Putt 21st 7.99
Discus 14th 24.47

Steve Winder M50:
3000m s/c 12th 10:58.99
8K XC 10th 30:24
5,000m 17:10.36
□ Half Marathon (GB Team□) 1:18.53

Stuart Flack M50:
1500m 9th Heat 3 4:44.41

Lisa Boland W40:
□ 100m 12.49
□ 200m 25.27 (W40 British Record)
□ 4x100m GB Team 2nd

Ashley Reid M40:
100m 7th Semi Final 12.35 (12.31 in Heat)
200m 3rd Heat 7 25.05
4x100m GB Team 5th

Stuart Flack

The prefix **W** stands for *Women* and **M** for *Men*.

- The number indicates the **age category** of the athlete in Masters athletics (veterans' competition).
- So **W70** means *Women aged 70-74*, **W40** means *Women aged 40-44*, **M50** means *Men aged 50-54*, etc.

These age brackets allow athletes to compete fairly against others of similar age at international Masters events.

Photo: W40 100M final - Epsom and Ewell Harriers YouTube

Since 1890, Epsom and Ewell Harriers has been bringing together athletes of all abilities at its home in Epsom. Whether you dream of breaking records or simply want to stay active, you'll find a place at Epsom and Ewell Harriers. Join [HERE](#)

Epsom's Rugby Team Make Light Of Missing Men To Go Top

27 October 2025



Gravesend 12 Sutton and Epsom RFC 29. Saturday 18th October.

Sutton and Epsom arrived at the Rectory Field seeking a return to winning ways following their first loss of the campaign at Sidcup. Gravesend, the masters of the close encounter last season, have retained their penchant for fine margins, opening their account with a draw and losing last week by a solitary point to Brighton. In a keenly contested match it was Sutton and Epsom who returned to Rugby Lane with the spoils as their 29-12 bonus point win took them to the top of the Regional 2 South East table.

Absenteeism, unacceptable to previous generations, has become the norm at this level of club rugby and the level-headed must take the approach of the famous phrase involving a couple of playground amusements. However, coaches still curse the slings and arrows of outrageous planning. It was Sutton's turn to suffer as six players from the Sidcup squad were absent without leave. This offered a chance for players to press their claim for 1st XV status and tested squad depth. Gravesend had their own issues as they were without their talented trio of George Bruce, Ben Kite and Ned Warren who were on their injured list.

Gareth O'Brien kicked off for the visitors in benign conditions on a mild afternoon. The initial sparring saw both sides employ robust runners that were met by thunderous tackling. Defence monopolised attack in the opening exchanges as

the sides looked for openings to exploit. After ten minutes Sutton were awarded a penalty 40 metres out and sent it towards the corner. Having secured the ball they demonstrated admirable control through the phases but the forwards were thwarted by staunch Gravesend defence until it was released wide and Finlay Scott waltzed in unopposed. Gareth O'Brien, taking over the kicking duties, impressively converted for 7-0.

S and E were soon on the attack as Adam Bibby's probing kick forced Gravesend to touch down and restart under their posts. Moments later a tremendous take of a clearance kick by Sutton was followed by an attempted 50/22 that rolled agonisingly into touch in goal. Consolation was swift and bounteous. Gravesend dropped the ball near halfway and Adam Bibby fly-hacked forward. The Kiwi centre burst forward, wisely declined the opportunity to try to scoop up the ball and kicked ahead again and won the race to the line to score. The conversion drifted wide but Sutton had a 12-0 lead at the end of the first quarter.

Gravesend needed a swift riposte and within five minutes they were on the scoreboard. Enjoying a spell of possession they threw themselves on the Black and Whites' defence and were met with magnificent tackling, with one Gareth O'Brien tackle synonymous of the team effort. The visitors were undone by an infringement and it was the host's turn to kick it into the corner. The initial thrust was repelled but another penalty gave the Rectory Field team a second chance that they gratefully accepted as lock Josh Mackenzie forced his way over. Rhys Betts' conversion failed but Gravesend were back within a score at 5-12.

With the interval approaching it was a case of hope springs eternal for the home team. Centre Ben Hope chose the perfect attacking line to make the initial break on halfway, then accelerating and evading the cover he left flailing tacklers in his wake for a stunning solo score. Rhys Betts nonchalantly added the extras and Gravesend were level at 12-12. For those who thought that the first period would end honours even and decided to avoid the half-time rush at the bar they would have missed Sutton's retort. The men from Surrey, as if affronted by the Kent club's recovery, put together their best attacking sequence. The ball went to winger Finlay Scott who did superbly in limited space to take the ball to the 22. The Sutton pack took over and went through multiple phases to camp under the posts and hooker Sam Lennie applied the coup de grâce. Gareth O'Brien chipped over the simple conversion to restore Sutton's lead. Referee Joe Garman's whistle blew to end the first half with the score at Gravesend 12 Sutton and Epsom 19.

The first period had been an even affair with Sutton having more of the territory and possession but both sides had shown both in attack and defence that the result was far from obvious. Added to the equation was S and E's bizarre statistic for this season that they had yet to win a second half in their previous five outings. Gravesend kicked off the second half and seized the initiative with a marvellous catch from Ben Hope who surged to the Sutton 22. The cautious optimism of the travelling Sutton support was immediately transformed to "here we go again". It was a case of "ye of little faith" as the visitors dealt admirably with the situation. Moments later the home support was on its feet as winger Andrew Cooke exploded down the flank threatening to score but at the crucial moment as the cover arrived he lost control of the ball and Sutton survived. From the scrum Sutton and Epsom were indebted to Number 8 Rob Hegarty who picked up from the base and carried them out of their 22 to relative safety.

Having weathered the storm, Dan Jones' alertness to a loose ball initiated the visitors' first attack of the second half as he passed to Gareth O'Brien who pegged Gravesend back in their 22. It was the start of a period of Sutton ascendancy and control. However, this did not result in any addition to the scoreboard. A promising attack was undermined by conceding a penalty on the deck 10 metres out. Then what looked like an inevitable score concluded with not only a penalty coughed up inches from glory but also a yellow card being issued to Sam Lennie. S and E coped magnificently with the numerical inferiority and managed to add to their lead when Gareth O'Brien's penalty made it 22-12 as the match entered the final quarter. The hosts, despite the advantage of the extra man, never set foot in the Sutton half for the statutory ten minutes as even the restart went out on the full.

Restored to 15 men, S and E continued to demonstrate impressive game management. With steely focus and determination they played the game in the Gravesend half and went in search of another try that would not only provide a sizeable lead but also earn a priceless bonus point. The host's defence had impressed all afternoon and they continued to frustrate the visitors' best endeavours, with Rob Hegarty being held up over the line. With five minutes to go Gravesend lost the services of their influential Number 8 Bradley Money. It was a yellow card that creates immediate debate as he made contact with winger Archie Fitzgerald's head as the winger slipped. The decision was harsh as there was no malicious intent but it was the correct call from Mr Garman given the modern laws. Boosted by the extra man, Sutton finally secured their bonus point as Rob Hegarty forced his way over from close range. Gareth O'Brien added the tricky conversion for 29-12 and Sutton ran down the clock without any further additions to the score.

This was a very impressive win for Sutton on the road with a depleted squad. It spoke volumes to the character and team spirit that those who came in looked very comfortable and contributed to an outstanding 18-man performance. Gareth O'Brien stepped in at Number 10 and had a superb game with his kicking, running and tackling as he provided a good measure of control on proceedings. Sutton starved Gravesend of territory and possession for the vast majority of the second half. To the host's credit their excellent defence only succumbed when they were down to 14 men but they never managed to gain a foothold in the second period to enable themselves to gain points from the game.

Results around the league were most favourable to Sutton and Epsom and the win propelled them to the summit of the table. Lest we forget that next Saturday, 25 October, the Black and Whites entertain erstwhile leaders Beckenham RFC. The Balmoral Avenue club lost for the first time on Saturday and dropped to fourth in this highly competitive league.

Sutton and Epsom

Bennion, Scott, Rea, Bibby, Fitzgerald, O'Brien, Wise, Boaden, Lennie, Hilton, Duey, McTaggart (c), Tame, Jones and Hegarty. Reprs: Howes, Butt and Lovatt.

Gravesend

Barnes, Dean, Hope, Filmer, Cooke, White, Betts, Brooker, Dadson, Shorter, Mackenzie, Falefatu, Williams, Chahal (c) and Money. Reprs: Anderson, Bruce and Sims.

John Croysdill

Sidcup Burst The Sutton & Epsom Bubble

27 October 2025



Sidcup 22 Sutton & Epsom RFC 12. Saturday 11th October.

Sutton & Epsom first visited Crescent Farm in 1914 for a 25-0 win and it is a delight that, despite the ravages of league rugby, a fixture dating back over 100 years and having been played in excess of 80 times still survives and is played on the same ground. Both clubs had started the season strongly and the form book suggested a close encounter. Sutton & Epsom had garnered maximum points whilst Sidcup had enjoyed a trio of triumphs in the opening four rounds. After a bruising encounter the Kent club inflicted the first defeat of the season on their opponents from Surrey by 22-12.

This fixture was blessed with glorious sunshine throughout on a still afternoon conducive to playing rugby. Experience replaced youth at 9 for the Black & Whites as Steve Munford came in for the injured Laurence Wise. Otherwise it was salvete for Messrs Finney, Lennard and O'Brien as the revolving door of selection spun at a modest pace at Rugby Lane. Sidcup kicked off under the steely gaze of referee Jed Wolfram who had journeyed down from Harrogate. The initial exchanges set the tone for the contest as both defences threw themselves into their duties with relentless relish. Time and space were at a premium as thunderous tackles littered the field.

After ten minutes Sutton & Epsom had the first opportunity to open the scoring. It was another chapter in the rugby opus, "Take Three Points Or Kick Into The Corner", and it was no surprise to the travelling Rugby Lane support that the Bunting boot kicked for territory rather than lighting up the scoreboard. The ball was overthrown and lost. An infringement meant Take Two and the further shunning of the three in search of higher riches. The swarming Sidcup defence held firm through multiple phases before forcing an error. It was to be third time lucky on the quarter-hour. This time the catch and drive was executed to perfection as Sam Lennie powered his way over. The conversion from the flank went astray but Sutton & Epsom belatedly led 5-0.

As the first quarter concluded the Black & Whites nearly conjured a try from a quickly taken penalty near halfway. Tom Lennard made an incisive break and Gareth O'Brien was denied by cover in the corner. A relieved Sidcup dropped out from under their posts and it was their turn to test the defensive fortitude of the visitors. The Kent team camped in the Surrey 22 and besieged the line. Heroic defence on their line was punctuated by two penalties. Following the second the home team opened their account with a slick catch and drive routine that saw lock Tom Epps ushered over the line. Josh Twyford's conversion came back off the upright and the score was 5-5 approaching the half-hour mark.

Sutton & Epsom had an opportunity to regain the lead when Gareth O'Brien's kick to the 22 was enhanced by an excellent chase forcing a knock-on. Sutton & Epsom appeared to create a try as they descended on the corner only for Sidcup to intercept the vital pass and clear to halfway. With the first half approaching time added on the hosts once more set out their stall in the visitors' 22. The forwards advanced and a try appeared to be a certainty but the defence on their own line by Sutton & Epsom was mightily impressive from a 5-metre penalty. However, all the commendable work was undone by a truly idiotic penalty as a forward bellyflopped onto the ruck. Without hesitation the ball was sent to the corner. The Crescent Farm lineout, like a well-oiled machine, churned out another try for another lock, as Freddie Ruff muscled over. Josh Twyford added the extras for a 12-5 lead.

In the dying embers of the first half the home crowd enjoyed a bonus as their team benefited from their ascendancy with a penalty awarded under the posts. Common sense, rather than greed, prevailed. Josh Twyford concluded the first period with a simple three points as his side went to their dressing room very satisfied with a 15-5 lead. It had been a very even first half but Sidcup had been the more clinical of the two teams making the most of their visits to the Sutton & Epsom 22.

Freddy Bunting kicked off with Sidcup playing, as is their preference, with the slope towards the clubhouse bar in the second half. With an early penalty at the scrummage the home team were able to advance to the Sutton & Epsom 22. However, early indications of a Sutton & Epsom revival were given by an immediate boost by a break with centres Bunting and Bibby weaving their way to the enemy's half. The territorial gain was enhanced by a penalty as the Black & Whites had a lineout with 10 metres to go. An infringement let the hosts off the hook. From the clearance kick from the scrum Agu Benson ran back the ball with great effect and marvellous continuity from the forwards had Sutton & Epsom threatening until they conceded a penalty.

The optimistic opening having been overcome, the Crescent Farm crowd were starting to enjoy their team's control of territory and possession. With the sun on their backs and the slope in their favour they went in search of a third try. The score came a dozen minutes into the half. Once more a lineout ball was controlled and the forwards advanced and Freddie Ruff scored his second. The simple conversion was added by Josh Twyford and Sidcup led 22-5.

Trailing by 17 points the triumvirate of Agu Benson, Archie Fitzgerald and Sam Lennie with their powerful carrying, time

and again, tried to free Sutton & Epsom from the Sidcup shackles. It was a testimony to the quality of the home defence that they only yielded in time added on.

The game entered the last quarter with the overriding feeling that in a game with two evenly matched sides it would take something spectacular to wrestle the advantage away from Sidcup as their defence was secure and controlling affairs. The Kent side had the luxury of knowing that, apart from the carrot of a bonus point fourth try, they did not have to score tries. Calculated kicking and tireless tackling kept Sutton & Epsom at arm's length. Normal time was up as Sutton & Epsom mounted another attack in the opposition 22. They were awarded a penalty. Dan Jones, celebrating his 50th 1st XV league appearance, carried towards the right-hand corner. As is his habit, Rob Hegarty emerged from the ruck with a blistering turn of speed to score in the corner. Captain Bunting stepped up and impressively converted. Sutton & Epsom trailed 12-22 and there was the glimmer of a losing bonus point to be had.

Time ran out for the visitors who not only lost their unbeaten status but also went pointless for the first time this season. Sidcup deserved their 22-12 victory that was constructed on the solid foundations of a secure scrummage, highly effective lineout and an outstanding defence that rapidly enveloped the opposition. Hooker Harry Large, as befitting his name, had a huge game. The boiler room of the second row was rewarded for their hard work with tries. It was a fine team performance of boundless concentration, hard work and bone-shaking tackling.

For the Black & Whites the game was possibly lost in the first half when they failed to capitalise on their period of ascendancy as chances for tries slipped through their grasp. However, the never-say-die effort was epitomised by their score in time added on. Archie Fitzgerald had his best game for the club, once again Agu Benson demonstrated what a valuable addition he is to the team and their defence of their line was magnificent to behold.

Next Saturday, 18th October, the Sutton & Epsom charabanc is on the road once more with a day trip to the Rectory Field to face Gravesend RFC. The Kent club lie sixth in the table after a couple of wins and a draw from their opening five encounters.

Sutton & Epsom: O'Brien, Fitzgerald, Bibby, Bunting (c), Benson, Lennard, Munford, Johnson, Lennie, Mount, Finney, McTaggart, Rea, Jones and Hegarty. Reps: Hilton, Tame and Scott.

Sidcup: Twyford, Ellison, McMahan, Smith, Keeley L., Ubee, Ibrahim, Keeley H., Large, Carmen, Epps, Ruff, Healey, Williams and Caple. Reps: Watson, Fordham and Stokes.

John Croysdill

Image by Robin Kennedy from a 2024 Sutton & Epsom and Sidcup fixture

Sutton & Epsom Keep The Wind In Their Sails

27 October 2025



Sutton & Epsom 40 Old Colfeians 24 Saturday 4th October. The cheeky aside that last Saturday's break from league action was to commemorate Sutton winning their opening three fixtures of the campaign is untrue but has some historical merit. It was only the fifth time, in the league era, that such a start had occurred - the last being in 2012-13. Meanwhile, their opponents Old Colfeians had sounded a klaxon call of intent with the notable scalp of Sidcup in the previous round of fixtures. A tough tussle was expected at Rugby Lane between two sides that had shared the honours in this fixture last season. The hosts maintained their perfect start in a magnificent match between two quality teams, winning 40-24.

There was a welcome return for captain Freddy Bunting, as Euan McTaggart rejoined the ranks with a proud 100% winning record as caretaker captain. He was joined by Rob Hegarty, Michael Bennion and Ben Tame, as ailments and absences ruled out Finney, Ghumra, Lennard and O'Brien. The visitors were missing the mountainous figure of their captain and powerhouse, Andy O'Malley.

Storm Amy had created testing, blustery and unfavourable conditions. Sympathy immediately went out to the full-backs and hookers as a sense of foreboding descended upon Rugby Lane with expectations of a scrappy and error-strewn contest. Perhaps the only point of interest would be whether the Bunting boot might set a personal distance record for a successful penalty kick. How wrong we were. Both sides produced a thrilling exhibition of running rugby, combining for ten tries to the delight of all assembled.

Captain Bunting kicked off with the benefit of the gusting gale that fortunately blew across rather than down the pitch. After an impressive opening by Sutton that was thwarted by sterling defence, Bunting lofted a kick towards the wing. With perfect timing, Josh Rea arrived and, after an initial juggle, secured the ball to coast home under the posts. Bunting gratefully accepted the simple conversion for 7-0.

Five minutes later, the S&E pack exploited a perfect attacking position to advance towards the posts and Sam Lennie was

unstoppable from short range. With the extras added it was 14-0 as the hosts made light of the conditions. The first quarter concluded with Sutton's third and finest score. Exploiting a generous narrow side, Archie Fitzgerald and friends interchanged passes from halfway for Laurence Wise to streak home under the posts. The conversion established an impressive 21-0 lead.

Old Colfeians, aided by a flurry of penalties, enjoyed their best passage of play and were rewarded with their opening try. Control and continuity in the hosts' 22 stretched the defence and the powerful presence of Estefan Ellis scored in the corner. The comeback was short-lived as Sutton exploited a penalty from ten metres in front of the uprights. Dan Jones ran wide, the ball was recycled, and a few carries later that man Jones was on hand to score. Bunting judged the wind to perfection for 28-5 as the Black and Whites secured the bonus point for their fourth try.

As the crowd discussed how many points the wind was worth, Sutton and Epsom pressed for more. For the final ten minutes of the half, S&E were frustrated by quality defence and an abundance of infringements. Referee Mr Edwards concluded the first moiety with the scoreboard showing Sutton & Epsom 28, visitors 5.

There had been a surprising lack of kicking and a refreshing desire to run the ball. The Sutton handling had been impressive with a minimal error count as forwards and backs combined to great effect. Old Colfeians, when given the opportunity, also looked to get the ball to their backs and showed enough to suggest there was still plenty left in this contest.

It did not require the wisdom of Solomon to imagine the coaches stressing the importance of the opening ten minutes of the second half: for Colfeians, to get an early score and a foothold in the game; for Sutton, to extinguish all hope and force the visitors into damage-limitation mode.

The men from Horn Park could not have asked for a more encouraging start as the powerful running of centre Louis Baker contemptuously brushed aside potential tacklers for a stunning solo score from halfway after barely a minute. Ryan Napper's conversion appeared to be perfection until the wind had the final say, leaving his team trailing 10-28.

A couple of minutes later, the exceptional Laurence Wise was forced from the field having been squashed beneath a considerably heavier opponent. As the pessimists trawled their memories for record reversals, the hosts responded in classical fashion. Sam Lennie made an eye-catching break, marauding into the opposition half and leaving tacklers in his wake or dumped on their behinds. Agu Benson continued the attack, cutting inside, and prop Dan Johnson arrived in support to score. The conversion never threatened, but Sutton had the comfort of a 33-10 lead with 25 minutes to play.

Old Colfeians were not deterred by this reverse and threw themselves at the Sutton defences with fury. Inches from a try they were penalised, and as hard as they tried it appeared that the home defences would not be breached. In the final ten minutes OC's full-back Chris Harris changed the game with individual brilliance. A mesmerising run from 40 metres deserved a try; he was denied by the last man, but Ryan Napper was in support to cross the whitewash. The No.10 converted his score for 17-33.

Five minutes later, the elusive Harris was on halfway being pushed towards touch. He caressed the ball between on-rushing tacklers, re-gathered it and disappeared over the horizon for a fabulous score that spoke volumes for his vision. It was one-way traffic and belief was coursing through Colfeian veins as the lead narrowed to 33-24.

Before the Chris Harris show, Sam Lennie had left the field with a knock. The hooker re-entered the fray as Sutton worked their way into the opposition 22. From a perfectly executed catch-and-drive from an attacking lineout, the irrepressible Lennie scored his second try. Bunting converted for 40-24 and Sutton had finally secured the win. Moments later, the contest was over.

Arguably, this was Sutton's best performance of the campaign so far. The tempo, fluency and handling in the first half were exceptional in the conditions as they spread the ball wide at every opportunity. Wingers Archie Fitzgerald and Agu Benson offered a formidable threat on the flanks, avoiding being ushered into touch with their combination of strength, skill and rugby intelligence. The mobile back-row trio of Rea, Jones and Hegarty were always on hand to offer continuity. Laurence Wise provided the tempo at 9 while Freddy Bunting orchestrated the plays from 10.

The front row of Johnson, Lennie and Mount not only provided a stable set piece but also offered a great deal around the paddock, including three tries. It was a superb team effort from 1 to 18.

No team will relish playing Old Colfeians this season. The front-row trio of Rameaux, Holland-Oliver and Agorioge boast over 300 appearances and were a formidable unit. The centre combination of Baker and Storey were the creative hub in an experienced back division. The icing on the cake is the attacking threat of Chris Harris, who countered with great intent. They were unfortunate to be missing some regulars, leaving them short of their usual heft in the back five. In the second period they came back strongly and deservedly were rewarded with a bonus point, coming close to a second as the clock wound down.

Next Saturday, 11 October, Sutton visit the historic Crescent Farm for an encounter with one of their oldest rivals, Sidcup RFC. At this early stage of a long season the Black and Whites lie second in the league behind Beckenham, who also have the maximum 20 points from four outings.

Sutton & Epsom:

Bennion, Fitzgerald, Scott, Bibby, Benson, Bunting (capt), Wise, Johnson, Lennie, Mount, McTaggart, Duey, Rea, Jones & Hegarty.

Replacements: Boaden, Tame & Munford.

Old Colfeians:

Harris, Ellis, Storey, Baker, Mutongwizo, Napper, Spaczil, Rameaux, Holland-Oliver, Agorioge, Collins, Ramdhan, Amor, Moles & Correa.

Replacements: Bantango, Blythe & Burkett.

John Croysdill

Image credit Robin Kennedy

Epsom's Rainbow Leisure Centre Places new operators

27 October 2025



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is pleased to confirm that Places Leisure will take over the operation of the Rainbow Leisure Centre in Epsom from 1 October. This follows the Council's announcement in July appointing Places Leisure as the new operator on a 10-year contract, with the option to extend for a further five years.

This marks an exciting new chapter for the Rainbow Leisure Centre with members set to continue benefitting from high-quality leisure, health and wellbeing services.

Places Leisure, part of the PFP Group the UK's leading social enterprise, will be investing its own capital into the leisure centre, upgrading the gym, studios, swimming changing rooms and more.

From 1 October, existing members or anybody looking for a new membership should contact enquiries@pfpleisure.org. More information can be found on their website - Rainbow Leisure Centre | Places Leisure. Places Leisure has been working closely with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and the outgoing operator, GLL, to ensure an efficient and safe handover.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee said:

"The wellbeing of our community is at the heart of everything we do, and our Health and Wellbeing Strategy continues to shape how we support residents to live healthier, happier lives. We're proud to be entering a new era at the Rainbow Leisure Centre, one that embraces a holistic approach to health and fitness, and delivers an inclusive Active Communities programme, alongside activities delivered both at the centre and outside in the wider community.

"Places Leisure is providing a platform where everyone in our borough can thrive - opening up opportunities for residents of all ages, including young people, the elderly and those living with a disability or illness, wherever they may be on their wellbeing journey.

"I'd like to thank Places Leisure and Greenwich Leisure Limited for working together to ensure a smooth transition for members. I'd also like to extend our gratitude to Greenwich Leisure Limited for the positive legacy they leave behind, which we are proud to build upon."

Dan Walker, Business Development Director at Places Leisure, said: "It is clear that the Rainbow Leisure Centre stands at the heart of the community, providing opportunities for local people of all ages and abilities to enjoy being active and to bring people together. We are delighted to be the new operators of the centre, and we thank GLL for the hard work they have put in during their time as operator. We look forward to a successful partnership with Epsom and Ewell Council, local stakeholders, and of course the colleagues who bring the centre to life.

"A thriving community is a community where everyone is welcome in a truly inclusive way, which is why within the first year of our contract we will invest c£4.7million in a series of projects including a new fitness suite, studios and changing facilities to support community engagement. Our commitment will further boost community activities, inspire people of all ages to lead an active and healthy lifestyle, whilst generating over £5million of social value each year."

Places Leisure website - <https://www.placesleisure.org/>

Places Leisure will also offer a wider range of health and wellbeing-related activities, delivered both inside and outside of the leisure centre, including:

- An Active Communities programme, including exercise referrals for falls prevention, cardiac rehab and weight management; community wellbeing walks, as well as programmes such as 'move through menopause' and Health MOTs, which will support local people in an inclusive way and enable the community to thrive.
- New leisure centre programmes targeted at under 16s and the elderly: including LES Mills exercises classes and Saturday Night Project activities for the under 16s and new EGYM and walking sports to help older adults be more physically active.
- Social value initiatives: such as work placement opportunities including for unemployed and disabled people;

leisure industry careers advice and curriculum support; and supporting the local economy by keeping spending within the local supply chain.

Places Leisure will continue to invest in the environmental sustainability of the centre, this will be overseen by an environmental coordinator.

Places Leisure is a social enterprise which is passionate about 'creating active places and healthy people' and improving opportunities for communities to be physically active. It experiences over 30 million visits per annum across the 101 leisure facilities that it operates on behalf of local authorities across the country and supports over 126k children and adults learning to swim each year. <https://www.placesleisure.org/>

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

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Epsom Racecourse: Preview and Tips for Sunday's Seven-Race Card

27 October 2025



It's Epsom Racecourse's season finale Sunday, and the seven-race card features the Apprentices' Derby Handicap, alongside four other handicaps, a conditions stakes and a novice.

*Read on for a full preview of the Epsom card, courtesy of Boyle Sports, who provide all the latest **horse racing odds**.*

The first race of the meeting is a nursery handicap run over seven furlongs (1.45). We have seven runners here, of which the most experienced are Galileo Island and Penhallam, who have been in handicap company for a few runs now. Of those running in a handicap for the first time, Ralph Beckett's Crystal Pier may make the most appeal, already proven over the trip and having run a nice race over course and distance last time. Penhallam might get the better of her with a five-pound claimer aboard, however.

Race two is a juveniles' conditions race over an extended mile (2.20). We have just four runners in this race, but it is a hot contest nonetheless as three of the contenders have previously won a race and the only maiden, Alfaraz, was second on debut at Goodwood. He looks well qualified to improve and win this race under Oisin Murphy. With an entry in the Group One Futurity Stakes later this year, he must be well thought of at home.

Next is a mile and a quarter novice (2.55). This race looks to be between the Gosdens' Gamrai and Alan King's Alcarath as they are the only two of the six with winning or placing form to their names. The latter would have to improve a fair bit, though, in order to get past the former, who won on seasonal reappearance and should be able to defy his penalty easily enough.

The fourth race is the feature Apprentices' Derby Handicap, run over a mile and half (3.30). Pat Phelan's Naasma seeks a hat-trick today, having won her last two starts at Windsor, and hasn't been so heavily penalised by the handicapper that she couldn't get involved once more. Give It To Me Oj, a dual-purpose performer, won over course and distance last time out on soft ground, and has been sharply raised in the weights as a result. Odin Legacy should have a good chance under George Bass, but Way Of Life looks to have the strongest claims at the weights for Jonathan Portman.

Following is a mile and a quarter handicap (4.05). David O'Meara's 10-year-old Orbaan has been steadily dropping back towards his last winning mark and, now just one pound above it, could get the job done under Tom Marquand here. He was fourth of 12 at this track last time over seven furlongs and it's interesting to see him upped in trip. Richard Hughes' Criminal also looks likely to be there at the sharp end, and is weighted accordingly to being one of only two three-year-olds in the race. Don't forget Kimeko Glory, though, who made a winning start for Brian Toomey and could go well again.

The penultimate race is a handicap over an extended mile (4.40). This is another four-runner race, with half of the field having won their last starts. Jiff's Army won over course and distance a month ago, while Falmouth Lad seeks a hat-trick

after successes at Newmarket and Kempton. With Rossa Ryan in the saddle, Jiff's Army looks the most likely to repeat the winning form, while Hot Cash has now come down to what should be a winnable mark and could be very competitive under Tom Marquand.

Finally, we conclude with a seven-furlong handicap (5.15). Kisskodi has won at this track twice this term already, while Ed Walker's Tokyo Joe looks to have come down to a nice mark and could run a big race after some promising performances so far this season, despite not having got a win on the board yet. Course and distance winner Marlay Park should be very competitive also under Paddy Bradley.

Epsom selections - Sunday:

1.45 - Penhallam

2.20 - Alfaraz

2.55 - Gamrai

3.30 - Way Of Life

4.05 - Orbaan

4.40 - Jiff's Army

5.15 - Marlay Park

Horses racing Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

Reigatian Hoodoo Broken: Sutton and Epsom Scale the Heights

27 October 2025



Old Reigatian 14 Sutton and Epsom RFC 49. Saturday 20th September.

Sutton and Epsom may have enjoyed the better start to the campaign with two victories compared to their opponent's two defeats but Old Reigatian could be considered the Black and Whites' Kryptonite. Since resuming league hostilities in September 2023 the Old Boys have won all four encounters amassing 142 points and scoring 20 tries. So for Rugby Lane supporters the 49-14 win was a most welcome end to the historical hoodoo.

There was a welcome return to the ranks for Gareth O'Brien and Sam Lennie but hat-trick hero Rob Hegarty and Ben Tame were absentees from the Sutton and Epsom squad. There was also the reappearance of Eric Duey in the second row after an absence of biblical proportions of three seasons. Referee Pierce Young's whistle announced the next chapter in the Old Reigatian v Sutton and Epsom story. Sutton and Epsom were to enjoy the first half benefits of the slope and the wind. This was amply demonstrated when Tom Lennard seized a loose ball in his 22 and kicked over the OR line for a drop out in the early moments.

Sutton and Epsom's first chance came after five minutes with a 5-metre lineout. The ball was overthrown and devoured by the defence and the opportunity squandered. But Ewan McTaggart, wearing the temporary burden of captaincy lightly on his broad shoulders, charged down the clearance and with almost divine intervention it landed in Eric Duey's hands for the try. Tom Lennard added the extras for a 7-0 lead. The remainder of the first quarter was entertaining fare as expansive play was matched by dogged defence by all concerned. In the 20th minute Sutton and Epsom were held up over the line but Reigatian relief from the long clearance was fleeting. The ball was run back and Gareth O'Brien sidestepped his man near halfway and scorched home for a fine solo score. Tom Lennard extended the advantage to 14-0.

On the half hour the sizeable following support from Rugby Lane were applauding their third try. A 5-metre lineout appeared to have been superbly defended as the packs slid towards touch but Dan Jones erupted from the heaving masses to score. Tom Lennard maintained his kicking excellence for 21-0. Emboldened by their lead and with Lennard exploiting the slope with intelligent kicking Sutton and Epsom dominated territorially. The valiant home defence once more held up the Black and Whites over their line. Once more it was only a temporary respite. Kyren Ghumra ran the ball back and Sam Lennie saw a gap in a scrambling defence to touch down for the bonus point score. Lennard maintained his 100% record for 28-0.

There was still time for the visitors to add another score to their first period riches. It was arguably the best of the first half five. The forwards provided clean ball on the 22 and it was spun wide. Laurence Wise ran the perfect supporting line

from Number 9 to collect an inside pass that opened up the defence and he sauntered home. The Lennard boot made it 35-0 and the referee concluded the half with Sutton and Epsom handsomely placed having made the most of the topography and meteorological assistance.

The hosts would enjoy the benefits of the slope and a strengthening wind. Even with their talented back division and their habitual winning of this fixture a 35-point deficit was considerable, perhaps not Everest but certainly Himalayan in proportions. Old Reigatian began the second half with great intent pegging back the visitors in their 22 and laying siege. It was one-way traffic with 5-metre penalties and lineouts accumulating as the Black and White line was put under the severest pressure. But courageous Sutton and Epsom defence repelled every attack.

Having survived the siege Sutton and Epsom scored on their first visit to their opponent's 22. The returning Sam Lennie brushed aside defenders in his usual imperious manner and passed to his fellow countryman Adam Bibby to score under the posts. Tom Lennard caressed over the conversion for 42-0. As the game entered the final quarter Sutton and Epsom faced disruption in their ranks. They lost Gareth O'Brien through injury and Adam Bibby through indiscretion. The former did not return but the latter reappeared after the mandatory 10-minute breather.

Finally, Old Reigatian scored a try that their efforts certainly warranted on an afternoon where the scoreboard did not reflect the nature of the contest. The score followed another period of sustained pressure. The ball was relayed to the left and Jonny Bridges manufactured the break and having been tackled stretched to the line to score. He celebrated his try with a finely struck conversion for 7-42. The weather deteriorated as the wind intensified. The Sutton and Epsom pack was now in the ascendancy but the Old Boys demonstrated immense character and were rewarded with a second try. Exploiting a retreating opposition the impressive Number 9 Max Nicol sniped with clinical efficiency to score. Bridges' kick made it 14-42 with five minutes left on the clock.

Sutton and Epsom had the final word with a magnificent seventh try. Steve Munford passed and looped near halfway to create an overlap. Agu Benson stormed down the touchline and passed to fellow flyer Kyren Ghumra who timed his pass to perfection for the ubiquitous Dan Jones to score triumphantly under the posts. The 100% Man, Tom Lennard, made it 49-14 and brought his personal tally to 14 points. In the dying moments a final Reigatian attack was thwarted by an interception near the Sutton and Epsom line to deny the hosts a consolation.

For the Black and Whites Tom Lennard had a first-rate afternoon, kicking superbly, whether tactically or bisecting the uprights, and marshalling a back division that impressed in defence and attack. The team defended superbly and the seven tries reflected their attacking intent in a strong overall display. Old Reigatian are in transition with the departure of familiar faces but they should take heart from their defence and resilience from the first to the last minute. Their backs were slick with ball in hand and will pose a threat to all teams. Max Nicol at 9 has the quality to get the best out of the backs and their collective passion and hard work in defence will provide a solid platform for improved results.

The league has a Saturday off whilst England play Canada for the World Cup. The competition returns on October 4th when Sutton and Epsom host Old Colfeians at Rugby Lane.

Sutton and Epsom: O'Brien, Benson, Scott, Bibby, Ghumra, Lennard, Wise, Johnson, Lennie, Mount, McTaggart (c), Duey, Rea, Jones and Finney. Reqs: Boaden, Fitzgerald and Munford.

Old Reigatian: Woodford, Coyle, Parker, Allen (c), Bridges, Holder, Nicol, Garrec, Marshall, Collister, Grant, Jones, Blackburn, Brooks C. and Niven. Reqs: Lee, Brooks O. and Flynn.

John Croysdill

Photo credit: Robin Kennedy

Dartford fail to bridge the gap with Epsom rugby

27 October 2025



Sutton and Epsom RFC 33 Dartfordians 29 Saturday 13th September

Last season's meetings between these two clubs reflected the Sutton and Epsom campaign. The early encounter in Bexley was one of several tight matches where the Black and Whites prevailed. The Rugby Lane return bore witness to a rampant Sutton and Epsom win in their end of season pomp. However, the hosts were greatly assisted by injuries to the experienced forward duo of prop Stephen Garrett and lock Lewis Potter who collided before the break and went straight to A and E. On the opening Saturday Sutton and Epsom enjoyed a resounding 49-19 success at Bromley RFC. In contrast, Dartfordians endured a chastening 80-14 loss at the hands of a sadistic Sidcup. There was mitigation for this dire defeat as the Kent Club were handicapped by absentees on a golf weekend. At this time of asking the sides shared ten tries and

Sutton and Epsom won a hard fought contest 33-29.

Sutton and Epsom had three changes to their squad with the return of the experienced front row duo of Boaden and Mount. In addition, there was the opportunity to see the mercurial talents of the lesser-spotted Archie Fitzgerald on the wing. The shrill blast of Mr Simon Matthews' whistle initiated proceedings with the visitors playing towards the Cabbage Patch on an afternoon of changeable weather. Dartfordians started brightly before a superb 50/22 from Tom Lennard put Sutton and Epsom on the offensive. The Kent side's resolute defence turned over the ball on their line and their bold counter was rewarded as moments later they were back in the Sutton half. It took another fabulous 50/22, this time by Adam Bibby, to set up another scoring opportunity. Rob Hegarty duly obliged surging over the line from a 5-metre scrum for the first try of his personally profitable afternoon. Tom Lennard added the conversion for a 7-0 after 17 minutes.

Not downcast the Dartfordians started to dominate possession and territory. A defensive lapse had the hosts defending deep in their 22 before a clearing kick. There followed a stunning break by fly half Gubby Thomas that had Sutton scrambling to cover a chip ahead. After a momentary respite Sutton conceded a penalty only for the away team to kick the ball dead in search for the attacking lineout. However, it was not long before they had another chance to punish a Sutton indiscretion. This time the penalty resulted in a 5-metre lineout. The ball was secured and winger Liam Brencher was stopped on the line before lock Ryan Chandler forced the ball over for the try. The conversion went astray but with the first period drawing to a close the Bexley-based side only trailed 5-7 and the scoreboard now reflected more accurately the balance of play as driving rain descended upon Rugby Lane.

Crucially Sutton and Epsom raised their game scoring two tries deep into time added on. On both occasions it was the forwards who earned the garlands. Second row Kieran Finney was the first scorer touching down under the posts. As the away team discussed the score in a huddle Tom Lennard hit the upright limiting Sutton's lead to 12-5. Soon after the Rugby Lane crowd were applauding another try. Following a searching kick another lineout ball was secured and Rob Hegarty was celebrating his second score. With the successful conversion the whistle went to end the first half. At 19-5 to Sutton and Epsom the pristine new scoreboard's score rather flattered the hosts who had struggled to find the fluency of last week. Dartfordians were unfortunate to trail at all let alone by 14 points as they had the better of the half in those important currencies of territory and possession. The visiting forwards had carried powerfully and full back Joe Scott's incursions into the line had been a constant threat.

Alex Mount announced his return at the start of the second half with a thunderous tackle on Harvey Whyte but the centre managed to complete a precise kick to the Sutton 22. The Dartfordians pack resembled an unstoppable juggernaut as the catch and drive's relentless advance of 15 metres had a sense of foreboding and inevitability with flanker Kieran Clarke scoring. Sutton's lead was reduced to 19-10. The wind dropped but the rain increased as conditions became difficult for handling. Quality back row play from Dan Jones won Sutton a penalty that was advanced to the corner. The lineout was dropped but recovered by Mount before his fellow prop Dan Johnson lost control near the line. The reinvigorated Kent players confidently ran the ball from their line and averted the danger.

Soon after, another penalty gave the Rugby Lane team chance to make amends with a lineout in the opposition 22. Finney secured the ball and Howes broke into the open field. The forwards carried up to the line before scrum half Laurence Wise espied a route to the line to score the Black and Whites' bonus point try. Tom Lennard stepped up to make it 26-10. As the final quarter approached Dartfordians went in search of a way back into the game. The crowd thought that Mr Matthews was raising his hand aloft for a try but inches from the line he spotted an infringement. Undeterred the visitors continued to lay siege and finally they were rewarded as fullback Joe Scott scored by the uprights and Thomas Gubby added the conversion as the margin was now 17-26 with 10 minutes remaining.

With the match back in the balance Sutton and Epsom produced some of their best rugby. The rain stopped, the sun shone and a rainbow covered the ground. For Sutton and Epsom there was a pot of gold at the end of it. They declined a kickable penalty in front of the posts 30 metres out as Tom Lennard drilled the ball towards the corner. A clean catch, the pack on the move and a jubilant Rob Hegarty completed his hat trick. With his fourth successful kick Lennard made it 33-17 with 5 minutes of normal time remaining and one would have thought that the win had been secured.

There was plenty of time to add there having been several stoppages for injuries and the visitors dominated every second of it. After five minutes of time added on Dartfordians scored their bonus point fourth try courtesy of a wonderful solo effort from Harvey Whyte who glided through the defence. Soon after a stunning run from Joe Scott from halfway was thwarted by a timely cover tackle from Kyren Ghumra. The Kent club continued to turn the screw as the field was littered with Sutton players requiring assistance. The visitors scored with the final play as Harry Wright crossed the whitewash to gain their second bonus point. The contest culminated with Thomas Gubby's conversion to leave the final score 33-29 to the Black and Whites.

In a keenly contested match that could have been claimed by either side the turning point was the two late Sutton and Epsom tries in the first half. The Dartfordians inspired by the athleticism of locks Chandler and Akinsete carried powerfully all game. Joe Scott made considerable yardage from 15 in a back division not afraid to run the ball out of defence. After a traumatic game last weekend every supporter from Kent will take great heart from how strongly their team have bounced back and finished strongly to push Sutton and Epsom to the very end. Once again scrum half Laurence Wise was not only at the heart of Sutton's play but also scored a try. Rob Hegarty's return of three tries highlighted once again how clinical he is when he has the ball in the last few metres. Sutton and Epsom were not at their best which was more credit to the visitors than to the detriment of the host's play but they earned the spoils for another 5 points.

Next Saturday Sutton and Epsom travel to Old Reigatian for a 3pm start against their Surrey rivals who are looking for their first win of the campaign following defeats to Old Colfeians and Sidcup. Dartfordians will host Beckenham to complete the testing trio of the top three for their opening three fixtures this campaign.

Sutton and Epsom

Ghumra, Benson, Scott, Bibby, Fitzgerald, Lennard, Wise, Johnson, Howes, Boaden, McTaggart ©, Finney, Rea, Jones and

Hegarty. Reps: Mount, Tame and Munford.

Dartfordians

Scott, Kpaka, Soler-Gomez, Whyte, Brencher, Gubby, Chappell, Garrett, Hooban, Chapman, Chandler, Akinsete, Williams, Clarke and Wright. Reps: Banks, Tuffley and Taylor.

Photo credit : Robin Kennedy

Surrey County Cricket Club ground in the red

27 October 2025



A Surrey sports ground is set to get a £114,000 hand out to keep it afloat after the site racked up a big budget shortfall last year. But councillors insist residents will now get clearer oversight on how the pavilion is run.

The sports ground - home to Guildford Cricket Club and Surrey County Cricket Club - was hit by major staffing problems in 2024/25, leaving the management company more than £114k in the red.

As the ground is run as a charity and doesn't have money of its own, Guildford Borough Council, as trustee, has agreed to step in and cover the gap. Without the cash, the charity would be unable to pay its bills and could go under.

Alongside plugging last year's hole, councillors have also signed off on a three-year business plan. That means topping up the ground's budget with a further £80,687 in 2025/26 and £20,572 in 2026/27 - though beyond that no more bailouts are expected.

Without this, officers warned, the charity could fail, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill while the council runs the site directly without the specialist know-how of its cricketing partners.

Speaking at the Executive meeting on September 12, Cllr Catherine Houston said it was "encouraging to see this coming into shape," adding: "It is not the shadowy 'what's happening here' question that we've all had. I'm really pleased to see the council is able to keep an eye on what is happening in a much more formal way."

She praised the new structure, with three directors and dedicated officers in place, saying it gave the council confidence there was now 'a vision' for the site.

CEO Pedro Wrobel also backed the move, recognising that the problems stemmed from decisions made before the current Executive was in place.

"This is an issue that has a legacy that starts from prior to this Executive coming to force," he said. "What you are doing here is getting a firm grip on that [...] and putting it in a position where you are able to improve the value for money the organisation is getting."

The Pavilion was refurbished in 2018 and reopened the following year, with the idea that hosting events and matches would help cover running costs. The council's Executive will make a decision on the extra funding in the coming weeks.

The Guildford Pavilion. (Credit: Google Street View)