



# Epsom rose from the ashes of Phoenix defeat

8 August 2024



Phoenix Sports 1-3 Epsom and Ewell FC. Emirates F.A. Cup Extra-Preliminary Round Replay - Tuesday 6th August 2024.

Well this was a strange one! With just fifteen minutes remaining, we trailed Isthmian League Phoenix Sports and the match appeared to be petering out into a 1-0 defeat, but a Carl Oblitey flick on put Will Kendall through to equalise in the 77th minute and within eight minutes he had a hat trick as our opponents fell apart in the closing stages of our 3-1 F.A. Cup win!

On a warm summer's evening in front of just over 150 spectators, even though Phoenix advised it as a suspiciously low 108, we made two changes from the eleven that had started Saturday's goalless encounter, with Oblitey coming in up front for the absent Carlos Polo-Infante and Fabio Nunes taking the place of Kenny Antony who was on the bench. This required a slight change of formation with the two strikers up front, which personally, I am a fan of.

Despite this, the match started in similar circumstances to our first meeting, with the home side edging possession in the opening ten minutes before we grew into the match. Toby Young made an excellent early block, before Ethan Nelson-Roberts crossed in a low ball to Kendall, but his shot was straight at Rob Budd in the Phoenix goal. Then we probably should have taken the lead in the 15th minute when another great cross from Nelson-Roberts was met by the unmarked Kendall at the far post, but his header back across goal was inches wide of the far post!

The home side, who had a change of Management over the close season and had given eleven debuts on Saturday were forced into an early substitution, yet somewhat against the run of play they opened the scoring in the 23rd minute when a Jack Marney corner to the far post was met by an unmarked header from Marcus Travers into the top corner of the net from close range, giving Faebian Witter no chance. This was a little harsh on our boys, but the lead was nearly extended minutes later as a free kick just missed our far post. We then had a strange incident when Witter saved a low shot, only to get up and collide with Marney in the penalty area. Both players appeared unhappy with the collision, as was the referee who chose to book the pair of them.

Witter was out again to clear smartly, while at the other end Kendall's header was on target, but was penalised for pushing. At the half, it had been a fairly even match to this stage. Clearly though our Manager Warren Burton wasn't happy and you could hear him tearing into our players at the break even from outside the dressing room!

Whether this had any effect on the players is hard to say though, as the pattern of the game didn't really change in the second half. Young set Luke Miller off down the right and his cut in and low shot was gathered by Budd at the second attempt, while Oblitey's strike from twenty yards didn't trouble him either. Maybe it was because we were behind, but it was clear that we were doing a bit more of the work as the ball started to spend more time in the Phoenix half. On the hour Kendall went up for a floated cross from Miller, although a subsequent clash of heads appeared to be accidental, and the foul awarded against Kendall seemed harsh from where I was standing.

In the 69th minute we withdrew Craig Dundas and brought Reece Tierney on at the back, which enabled Adam Green to move into the hole vacated by the former Sutton legend, but time was beginning to run out on our cup adventure. Then out of nowhere, it all changed. Kendall drilled the ball past Budd as described above and we were level out of nowhere. Within six minutes Miller cut in from the right and went down under a defender's challenge. Our winger had gone down theatrically in the first half in similar circumstances, so I wasn't expecting anything here but after a little thought, the referee awarded the penalty. It was a soft one, but we've had them awarded against us often enough before! Kendall put the ball into the top corner in the 83rd minute to give us the lead.

Whilst Budd might not have had a chance with the penalty, he will be the first to admit that our third goal was his fault as a long ball was sent forward and maybe distracted by both Kendall and a defender, he missed his clearance completely, leaving Kendall the empty net from eighteen yards in the 85th minute. It might take me some time to find out whether a hat trick in just eight minutes sets any sort of club record, but in that short time the result changed completely and we saw the game out with no further alarms.

So what actually happened here? I can only think of one similar turnaround like this in recent years, which was our very late 3-2 win over Larkfield & New Hythe back in 2021. Maybe we were fitter than the opposition and it told in the closing stages? Certainly this was something Burton was very keen on focussing on when he took over back in January, although there were no signs of a lack of fitness from Phoenix on Saturday. Maybe it was the substitution of Tierney for Dundas, but sometimes it's hard to put your finger on why we suddenly took over. Either way, we knocked out an Isthmian League club for the second successive year and won £1,125 as a result. It is now Isthmian League Hayes and Yeading United who stand in our way of a further £1,444 in prize money and we will host them at King George's Field on Saturday 17th August.

Epsom & Ewell: Faebian Witter, Toby Young, Callum Wilson, Adam Green ©, Craig Dundas, Fabio Nunes, Luke Miller, Thompson Adeyemi, Will Kendall, Carl Oblitey, Ethan Nelson-Roberts

Subs: Reece Tierney for Dundas (69)

Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk)

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## Local football feel the blues from Chelsea FC

8 August 2024



The **Epsom and Ewell Colts**, a longstanding community-led grassroots football club, are facing a crisis after the abrupt cancellation of their primary training venue at Blenheim High School. The school's decision to make way for the Chelsea FC Foundation has impacted 170 girls from the under-8s team and upwards, leaving them without a place to train or play.

Founded in 1971, the Epsom and Ewell Colts have been a cornerstone of the local community, providing young people with opportunities to develop teamwork skills and forge lifelong friendships. Community football offers far more than the possibility of turning professional or enhancing physical fitness and skills. It strengthens community bonds, offering young people a productive outlet that teaches important life lessons and steers them away from negative influences. Players, coaches, volunteers, and supporters collaborate towards common goals, fostering mutual respect and understanding. This inclusive environment breaks down social barriers and contributes to the community as a more welcoming and integrated place for all.

With the Epsom and Ewell Colts now displaced from their core training ground at Blenheim High School, both players and parents are left feeling disappointed and concerned for the future of their club. Elsie, the vice-captain of the U18 girls' team, voiced her frustration, stating, "So much for encouraging girls football. How disappointing." The disappointment was echoed by the manager of the team, **Steve Luff**, who stated: "It's a grave mistake to prioritise commercial interests or go for the cachet of a professional club over the development of local athletes, who represent the true future of football."

**Pauline Russell**, the Chairwoman of Epsom & Ewell Colts, claims that Blenheim School's decision to displace the team in favour of a professional club "goes against the objectives and aims of the school listed in their last annual report." This refers to Blenheim School's objective 'to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Epsom and the surrounding area the provision of facilities and recreation'.

**Rob Williams**, Director of Finance and Operations at Blenheim School responded "Blenheim made the decision to offer their 3G pitch to Chelsea FC on Tuesdays and Thursdays to further develop their existing relationship with Chelsea FC and in support of the work they are doing to develop grassroots youth football opportunities in the local community, particularly with girls. This change was not the fault of Chelsea FC or Chelsea Foundation.

"Blenheim have offered several alternative days and times for Epsom and Ewell Colts to move their Thursday booking to and are delighted that they have made additional bookings on Mondays, Saturdays and Sundays to use the newly installed 3G pitch which has seen unprecedented demand.

In the face of a possible crisis at the club, Pauline Russell is making an attempt to rally the community, stating: "We are calling on the community, local authorities, and Chelsea FC to recognise the importance of grassroots sports and to work with us to find a solution that allows these 170 girls to continue their training on Thursdays without disruption."

While the club searches for alternative venues and potential collaborations with other local organisations, they have put forward an online petition for the public to show their support.

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## Epsom replay rise from the ashes hoped for

8 August 2024



Epsom & Ewell 0-0 Phoenix Sports. Emirates F.A. Cup Extra-Preliminary Round. Saturday 3rd August 2024.

Our first competitive match at the ninth official “home” ground in club history took place as we took the field at Corinthian-Casuals’ King George’s Field against Isthmian League Phoenix Sports in the opening round of the F.A. Cup and the contest ended in a largely uneventful goalless draw, with both teams appearing content to hold out for a replay as time ticked down in front of a fairly healthy crowd of 148.

As befits any new match of the season, there were a number of players making their debut, although less than in recent years as Manager Warren Burton chose to retain quite a few from last season. Grabbing all the headlines though was Sutton United Hall of Fame member Craig Dundas, who made his competitive bow in Epsom colours at the age of 43. A few years ago we had 40 year old Jamie Byatt making his debut for the club and I wrote at the time that he would probably be the last player to play for this club who was born before I started watching Epsom and Ewell in 1981. However, since that day we have seen Paul Springett, Reggie Savage and now Dundas who fit into that category with surely the former Sutton man becoming the last. For those who like their stats, our former Manager Ray Purvis holds the record as the oldest player to represent the club at the age of 47 years and 29 days when he took the field at Clapton on 30th April 2005.

Anyway, back to the match! Four players took the field for the first time in defender Toby Young, Dundas, Carlos Polo-Infante and Kenny Antony, with Fabian Nunes joining the action later in the day. Chances were few and far between, although we had an early concern when our keeper Faebian Witter had to come out of his area to clear and conceded a free kick just outside. Fortunately the strike deflected off our wall and away for a fruitless corner. The opening fifteen minutes were slightly more in our opponents favour as they attacked mainly down the left and Young picked up a fairly early yellow card for a foul, although he was then clattered into a few minutes later, earning the Phoenix number 3 a yellow of his own.

The game became more even after this, although not a lot was happening in either penalty area. Our best opportunity of the half came with a cross from Ethan Nelson-Roberts that was a little off target and required a catch on the line from the Phoenix keeper or we might have had a fortuitous opener. Back came the visitors though and a shot from the left was well blocked by a defender before Witter had to get down well to make a good save with his left hand. Nelson-Roberts then picked up a card on the advices of the referee’s assistant and we went in at the break as we had started.

The second half continued in a similar pattern and Phoenix nearly scored with a volley in the 55th minute after a free kick was only headed out as far as the waiting player. Fortunately for us, the well-struck effort from just inside the penalty area cleared our bar, but only just. Luke Miller then created something out of nothing as he controlled a deep ball across the field, just keeping it in play, before running at a defender and crossing into the danger area, although his low ball in was a little too close to the keeper who claimed the ball.

Moments later we had our best chance of the match after a wayward keeper clearance left us with an opportunity. Will Kendall closed the keeper down and the loose ball fell to Polo-Infante, but with a fairly vacant net ahead of him from eighteen yards, he couldn’t keep his shot down. Nunes replaced him shortly after this. Then Miller went down in the area between two defenders, but there was never enough there to award a penalty and the game continued to meander. Kendall was tripped on an attack and everyone appeared to stop, expecting a free kick which wasn’t given and the opposition broke away at goal. However, Young got over well to make the saving challenge.

As the time started to run out Young was just over the bar with a looping header from Adam Green’s corner, while Miller was off target with two tries, although not by that much in either case, particularly the latter effort which almost shaved the far post from an angled shot. Both teams seemed happy enough to take a replay by the end of the match and as a result we will make our first ever appearance at Mayplace Lane, near Dartford on Tuesday evening, which means that our League game at Alton will be moved back. It would have been moved anyway though as Alton also drew in their cup tie.

Looking back at this match, there were quite a few similarities with our goalless cup draw twelve months ago against Met Police. Both they and Phoenix finished in sixteenth position in their respective Isthmian divisions last season and of course, we went on to win that away replay by two goals to nil. I wonder if we can repeat that feat on Tuesday evening!

Epsom & Ewell: Faebian Witter, Toby Young, Ethan Nelson-Roberts, Adam Green ©, Callum Wilson, Craig Dundas, Luke Miller, Thompson Adeyemi, Will Kendall, Carlos Polo-Infante, Kenny Antony

Subs: Fabian Nunes for Polo-Infante (65), Sirak Negassi for Antony (76)

Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk)

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James Redfarn adds:

### **Epsom and Ewell FC new signing Article**

The Epsom and Ewell Football club have pulled off an exciting new signing for the 24/25 season, acquiring the skills and talents of the football veteran Craig Dundas. This player is well known for his immensely impressive tenure at Sutton United, having played over 500 games and scored over 100 goals; Dundas has rightly earned the moniker of Sutton united legend.

At the impressive age of 40, Dundas became one of the oldest players to make a debut in the English Football League. EFL statisticians have proclaimed Dundas to be the oldest debutant since World War Two.

Now at the age of 43, his signature to the Salts is a coup for Epsom and Ewell, adding a wealth of experience and leadership to Warren Burton’s squad. Dundas is expected to deliver not only in terms of skill and composure on the field but also by offering his invaluable experience and guidance to younger teammates.

In addition to his role as a player, Dundas will serve as a player-coach, a dual role that promises to have a significant impact both on and off the pitch. His presence is anticipated to bolster the team's performance, offering strategic insights and enhancing team dynamics.

There could be exciting times ahead for Epsom and Ewell FC, and the Dundas effect will hopefully be in full force for the rapidly approaching season.

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## Epsom Racing tips for Thursday

8 August 2024



Racing returns to Epsom on Thursday, with six races on the card for what is expected to be an exciting evening of racing.

Timed perfectly to pick up punters following the day's racing at Glorious Goodwood, the action begins at 6pm, with the final race taking place at 8:35pm. The going on the Downs is good to firm, but with another day where the temperatures are set to top 30 degrees, the ground could be firm by the time racing gets underway.

Read below to find out the latest **horse racing odds** and tips from Thursday's Epsom card.

### 18:00 - Peter Bromwich Apprentice Handicap

The opener is a 1m2f handicap, with four-year-olds and above contesting this Class 5 contest. Having finished second over a shorter trip at Epsom earlier this month, **Chips And Rice** will run off an unchanged mark and could push the fancied Big Bear Hug.

### 18:30 - Pick And Place Your Stakes Challenge EBF Restricted Novice Stakes

Next up, a race for Novice two-year-olds, with a 7f trip to negotiate in this Class 4 contest. Parole D'Oro's second placed start at Ascot makes for an appealing option, however, debutant **Noble Phoenix** is an exciting newcomer and could upset the odds.

### 19:00 - Outdoor Advertising Is The Best British EBF Fillies' Handicap

Another Class 4 race is up next, with a 1m1/2f trip for a top prize of £7,731 on offer for the winner. **Dreamrocker** is the favourite, with a career-best win at Ascot 20 days ago representing excellent form and this should be enough to push through a 4lb rise in weights.

### 19:30 - Iron Maiden Red Wine Handicap

Up next, a Class 6 handicap for three-year-olds which will be run at just over seven furlongs. Having finished a strong fourth at Doncaster 21 days ago, **Moakadd** for Roger Varian is the likely frontrunner, down 1lb.

### 20:05 - Miles Commercial Handicap

The penultimate race of the card is a Class 5 contest, run over 1m4f and open to 4yo+ horses. Having shown a marked improvement in form so far this year, **Rogue Tornado** is expected to continue this good form as the front-runner in this race.

### 20:35 - Trooper 'Time People Please!' Handicap

Finally, this 6f handicap sees just five expected runners for what is a close Class 5 contest to call. With a first time visor fitted and good form this season, **Macanudo** will be expected to perform well especially when considering a drop back in grade for this race.

### Selections - odds courtesy of BoyleSports

18:00: Chips And Rice - 11/4

18:30: Noble Phoenix - 6/1

19:00: Dreamrocker - 11/4

19:30: Moakadd - 3/1

20:05: Rogue Tornado - 4/1

20:35: Macanudo - 15/8

Image: Credit Paul. **CC BY 2.0**

# Anyone for tennis?

8 August 2024



Continuing the enthusiasm for tennis following Wimbledon, **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** will be offering bookable free tennis sessions from Tuesday 23 July to Monday 26 August, between 8am and 12pm.

Courts can be booked by visiting Epsom & Ewell Parks Tennis / Home ([lta.org.uk](http://lta.org.uk)).

The free summer sessions follow the council's move earlier this year to introduce a new 'pay as you play' scheme across all tennis courts. The scheme seeks to make the borough's tennis courts more self-sufficient, with all income raised being reinvested into the courts.

The council has also implemented free coaching opportunities at Court Recreation Ground and free booking slots on Saturdays to enable those of all ages, experience, and socio-economic background to participate.

Councillor **Liz Frost**, (RA Woodcote and Langley) Chair of the Environment Committee, said: "The decision to extend free, bookable morning sessions at our tennis courts during the summer holidays gives residents, particularly our younger ones, a greater opportunity to keep active and have fun during the break."

"We hope that this this will encourage those who have otherwise not considered playing tennis the incentive to give it a go and if they enjoy it, join as members in the future."

- Maintenance work will be carried out at Gibraltar Recreation Ground and Poole Road courts on Friday 26 July to redraw the line markings. The courts will be closed at these locations on that day.
- Players who have already signed up for annual membership under the scheme will receive one month's extension to their membership.
- The council currently offers two free, bookable sessions between 9-10am and 10-11am on Saturday mornings on all our tennis courts, except Court Rec.
- In Court Rec - the council currently offers one free session on a Saturday between 10-11am and we will soon be offering a further free Coach Activated group session at this location.
- Outside of the free, bookable slots, the pricing is as follows:

Ad-hoc Cost Per Hour All Courts	£6.00
Additional Cost Per Hour for Floodlights	£6.00
Annual Household Subscription	£40.00
Annual Household Subscription for those in receipt of low-income benefits	£20.00

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# Get a lift from Epsom's flat season.

8 August 2024



The Flat season continues at Epsom this Thursday, with six evening races for fans to enjoy in the summer sun.

The going on the Downs is good to soft, soft in places, but with a day of sunshine forecast, it could firm up throughout the day before the first race at 5:55pm. The racing runs all the way through until 8:35, with the main attraction being the Class 4 Betfred "Bet Builder" Handicap at 8:05.

Read below to find out the latest **horse racing betting** and tips from Epsom's card on Thursday:

#### **17:55 - Betfred Play Fred's 5 Million EBF Maiden Stakes**

The first race of the evening will put on show some promising two-year-old horses, who will race along seven furlongs. Having been bred from Andrew Balding's stable star Kameko, there are high hopes for Spell Master having debuted in sixth place at Newbury 14 days ago. However, Oisin Murphy's presence on John and Thady Gosden's **Attack** cements its place as the top pick for this contest.

#### **18:30 - Steve Donoghue Handicap**

For this Class 5 race, a slightly longer trip of 1m 1/5f awaits the runners and riders, with nine entries competing for the top prize of £4,448.90. The standout runner in the race is **Blenheim Star**, with three wins in six outings so far this year, most recently at Brighton 16 days ago, but trainer William Knight will hope that the ground firms up.

#### **19:00 - Chantilly Handicap**

Next up, the second handicap of the card sees six runners competing over a 1m 2f trip. For Jack Channon, **Amancio** is the type who can bounce back from a disappointing fifth place at Chester 34 days ago and Rossa Ryan will hope to guide home the three-year-old to a win which replicates success at Haydock on April 27.

#### **19:35 - Betfred Ladies' Derby Handicap**

For the fourth race, for female amateur jockeys only, **Naasma** looks like the smart option having operated well at this C&D. One to watch out for in this race is also Roost, who is down in grade and with blinkers back on could enter the running.

#### **20:05 - Betfred 'Bet Builder' Handicap**

For the second Class 4 race of the evening, ten runners will take to the short 7f 3y trip. Having performed well at this C&D, **Guiteau** is the top pick for the race, although the highly rated Miss Information will be expected to produce a strong performance under the charge of Oisin Murphy for Andrew Balding.

#### **20:40 - Betfred 'The Classic Bookmaker' Handicap**

For the final race of the evening, 12 runners will take to the course in a race which is exclusively for three-year-olds. From a career low mark, **Bated Breeze** catches the eye, especially when first-time blinkers are added into the equation. Meanwhile, Havana Mojito is the forecast favourite having finished runner-up here 16 days ago and is at a 4lb lower mark.

#### **Selections - odds via BoyleSports**

17:55 - Attack 5/2

18:30 - Blenheim Star 9/4

19:00 - Amancio (NAP) 6/1

19:35 - Naasma 5/1

20:05 - Guiteau 3/1

20:40 - Bated Breeze (E/W) 10/1

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## **Epsom Downs Summer season race tips**

8 August 2024



The Summer Season kicks off at **Epsom Downs** on Wednesday evening with a competitive six-race card for punters heading to the track.

Racing gets underway at 6.20pm with a seven-runner apprentice handicap before rounding off at 9.00pm as ten runners take on the class four handicap.

*Read below to see the latest **Horse racing betting** and tips for Epsom's Wednesday card*

The opener (6.20) is an apprentice handicap over the one mile and two furlong trip with Giselles Defence arriving in the best form of the field, winning at Pontefract in May and getting back on track at Leicester 18 days ago after a poor ninth prior so should take the beating here. Of his rivals, Oj Lifestyle was a Newbury maiden winner in 2022 who hasn't fired since but is dropping down into much calmer waters here.

Race two on the card (6.50) sees seven runners head to the stalls for the maiden stakes in class four for two-year-olds and Sir Peter Fossick for trainer Charlie Johnston is taken to get off the mark on debut, a half-brother to several winners over the this seven-furlong trip so he makes plenty of appeal on paper.

Mr Wagyu is on a losing run but has a fine record at Epsom and is back for more in race three on Wednesday's card (7.25), only slightly edged out on Derby Day so has to be considered back at his favoured track. Indian Creek won this race last year off a 2lb higher mark so is set to be amongst the top end as well in this six furlong class three handicap.

Trainer Ralph Beckett's son of Galileo, Atlantic Convoy, looks ripe for improvement in handicap company and he is the selection in race four on the card (8.00) having taken a step in the right direction when seventh in a Sandown maiden last month and is up in trip here.

The penultimate race on Epsom's card arrives at 8.30 with a one mile and four furlong handicap in class six. A competitive heat, Our Papa Smurf should be bang up there for trainer Gary Moore off the back of a win at Goodwood on June 14, going up in trip here by three furlongs. Of his rivals, Angel On High can give the Moore runner plenty to think about with two thirds and a second in his last three outings.

Finally, the card comes to a close with the ten-runner handicap in class four for three-year-olds and upwards (9.00), with preference in the finale heading to Justcallmepete, who can cash in on his low turf mark - 10lb lower than when he races on the all-weather surface - to take the spoils in the card closer ahead of course and distance winner Marlay Park, who has won four times at Epsom in his career.

#### **Epsom selections - Wednesday**

6.20 - Giselles Defence

6.50 - Sir Peter Fossick

7.25 - Mr Wagyu

8.00 - Atlantic Convoy

8.30 - Our Papa Smurf

9.00 - Justcallmepete

Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

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## **Epsom kickboxers seek funds for world championships**

8 August 2024



Epsom based **Absolute Martial Arts**, a well-regarded martial arts school, is celebrating a significant achievement this year. Thirteen of their talented students have qualified and earned the honour to represent England at the WKC World Championships in Portugal.

However, the path to this prestigious event comes with considerable financial challenges.

In the world of kickboxing, athletes receive no financial backing. Craig and Rachel Harrington, passionate owners of Absolute Martial Arts, commented, "Unfortunately, kickboxing is a sport that requires complete self-funding." This means every expense - from flights and accommodation to entry fees and team uniforms - must be covered by the athletes themselves.

To raise some of these costs, Absolute Martial Arts is hosting a free fundraising event at **Wallace Fields Infants School** in Epsom on July 21st. The event promises to be a fun-filled day, featuring a "sparathon", various activities for children and adults alike, a BBQ with raffles, and so much more. The Harringtons further mentioned that they would love for this event to raise awareness, not just for kickboxing as a sport, but also for the athletes who go to great lengths to achieve their dreams.

Notably, the club holds a strong track record, having achieved success in previous years. During the last championship, they sent seven fighters who brought home an impressive tally of four gold and three silver medals— a true testament to their skill and dedication. This year, with thirteen qualifiers, the expectations are even higher, though so are the financial demands. As a result, Absolute Martial Arts is reaching out to the local community within Epsom and Ewell, counting on a strong turnout at their upcoming fundraising event.

Mark your calendars for July 21st at Wallace Fields Infants School and join them for the fundraiser. The support of local residents can make a significant difference in helping these young athletes realize their dreams on the world stage.

For more information, visit Absolute Martial Arts' website or contact Michelle Downes at [doodab@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:doodab@blueyonder.co.uk) or 07540 460680.

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## Local college to drive student success

8 August 2024



From September, Nescot College in Ewell, Surrey is offering a new course on Motorsport Vehicle Maintenance and Repair with spaces still available for school leavers aged 16 - 19. An element of the course includes the preparation and inspection of a real-life Nescot racing car which will be entering high profile racing events around the UK. Student mechanics will attend track days at circuits like Brands Hatch, Donington Park and Silverstone to experience motorsport in action and keep the car in top condition.

The one-year qualification - the Institute of Motor Industry Diploma in Motorsport Vehicle Maintenance and Repair - is an addition to Nescot's well-established Motor Vehicle Department. It's a full-time course which involves a combination of practical experience and theory. Students learn on several vehicles in the college workshop including the racing car, and study systems such as the brakes, engine and suspension.

The course has been developed by a teaching team with a track record of success in national motorsport competitions. Students from other departments such as engineering, media, sport, and hospitality will also be able to take part in the competitions, contributing their own skills and forming a multidisciplinary motor racing team.

Nescot will enter their team, driver and car into the Student Motorsport Challenge which is embedded into the British Racing & Sports Car Club Nankang Tyres City Car Cup. The season typically consists of 7 race events which include 17 races. Students race against other schools, colleges and universities in the Challenge and also compete against the

professional teams and drivers in the City Car Cup. Students will be responsible for the smooth running of the car and will attend racing circuits to experience motorsport, learn on the job and network.

George Keith, Head of Curriculum for Construction, Trades and Green Technology at Nescot said “If you want to be a mechanic or have an interest in other roles in motorsport, then this course will be right up your street. You get hands on experience in the workshop, and then at the racetrack. You’ll be making our Nescot race car the best it can be, while getting work-ready and learning vital skills for a career, post-college. We still have some spaces available, so why not sign up and be a key part of our racing team?”

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said “We’re keen to offer courses on things that young people are passionate about and wherever possible, help them find ways to turn those interests into careers that they’ll love. This is a perfect example, mixing motorsport with mechanics to create an exciting course which can set them up for a great career. I can’t wait to see Nescot’s racing car in action, and it will be amazing knowing that our students got it to the start line, with their new skills, knowledge and hard work. Then it’s just fingers crossed for a win!”

Local businesses are being encouraged to support or partner with the Nescot race team. Sponsors already on board include LKQ Euro Car parts (which has donated new vehicle parts for the build) and Bosdog vehicle wrapping in Redhill (which has agreed to carry out the wrap at a discounted price). Sponsors not only support young people’s education but may also have the opportunity to get their logo on the race car and attend motorsport events. Businesses interested in finding out more, can contact George Keith on [gkeith@nescot.ac.uk](mailto:gkeith@nescot.ac.uk) or call 0208 394 1731, extension 3136.

Entry requirements for the course are 4 GCSEs grade 9-3 (A\*- D) that includes English grade 3 and Maths grade 4. Applicants must have a strong interest in the Motorsport industry. Following completion of the course, a successful student with this qualification may have the opportunity to attain a related Higher Education qualification or be employed as an apprentice within the Motor or Motorsport industry.

To find out more about the Motorsport course, call 020 8394 3038, visit [www.nescot.ac.uk](http://www.nescot.ac.uk) or email [adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk](mailto:adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk). More information on the motorsport competition Nescot is taking part in can be found at [www.studentmotorsport.com](http://www.studentmotorsport.com)

Nescot is holding a Summer Fair, where prospective students can visit the college and see the facilities. This is taking place on Saturday 15th June 2024, 10.00am - 2.00pm.

Credit for image: Student Motorsport

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## Epsom Sports Club £1 million boost

8 August 2024



**Epsom Sports Club** has been awarded £1 million in funding by Surrey County Council towards constructing a new clubhouse as part of the YourFundSurrey Large Community scheme.

The clubhouse will open up new exterior and interior spaces, creating a shared space in the heart of the community for a wide range of activities, with aims to support new participants to become active, particularly those from inactive and under-represented groups. The clubhouse will be built at Epsom Sports Club’s sports facilities space in **Old Schools Lane in Ewell**, where a range of sports and activities already take place such as cricket, croquet, hockey and tennis - to name a few.

As a charity that promotes active lifestyles and community recreation for Epsom and Ewell residents, providing facilities for sports, recreation and other leisure activities, the Sports Club caters to all ages and abilities. Around 800 young people regularly participate in these sports. Walking cricket and hockey have been recently introduced for older members and a disability hockey group is also affiliated with the club.

Planning permission has been granted for a fully accessible single-storey building which will hold four changing rooms, a clubroom for indoor activities, a kitchen and a bar for both participants and spectators.

**Simon Everest**, one of Epsom Sports Club’s Directors, said: “The facility will be open to local community groups to hire and we anticipate that this will be of huge benefit to the Borough.”

The funding was granted after the YourFundSurrey panel was presented with the planned community usage of the new clubhouse, which is said to hold activities such as exercise classes, art classes and the card game ‘bridge’. The panel was also pleased to hear of potential plans for organisations such as guiding or scouts to make use of the facilities.

**Natalia Anda**, Chair of Epsom Hockey Club said: “We are so excited and grateful to have received this grant from YourFundSurrey. “The clubhouse will made such a difference to the club in maximising the potential use of our outdoor sports pitches, providing much needed changing facilities and a place to socialise for our members and the wider local community.”

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## Gold star at the end of the Rainbow

8 August 2024



Better's Rainbow Leisure Centre in Epsom has maintained its 'Excellent' status from QUEST - the Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure. This follows a mystery visit from the organisation in April plus a planned audit in May.

Rainbow's facilities include two pools - full-size and teaching - a sports hall, 100+ station gym, soft play area, spa and a senior activity room.

The centre has approximately 70 members of staff (full and part-time) and around 3,000 members who are mainly families or adults over the age of 66.

QUEST's report commented on the centre's excellent, well-maintained facilities and its extremely warm, friendly and welcoming staff. Emily Simmons, General Manager, comments, "I am immensely proud of the centre and our team. Achieving QUEST Excellent status is no easy task and staff consistently work hard to maintain the high standards they set themselves.

"QUEST is a fantastic tool for evaluating best practice and customer service levels. It sets the standard for leisure centre management and sports development, taking into account programming, facilities, management policies and procedures, staff training and development, and environmental impact. This award means both customers and staff are getting the highest level of service, care and support."

Better's Head of Service in the area Steve Hannen adds, "A huge well done! It's a great achievement for Rainbow to maintain Excellent status. This is not an easy thing to do and the entire centre team should be proud."

Rainbow Leisure Centre is managed by charitable social enterprise GLL under the 'Better' brand. Supporting the wellbeing of local communities is an important part of the organisation's ethos.

GLL press

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## Student racemakers favourites at the Derby

8 August 2024



**Ewell** based **Nescot** (North East Surrey College of Technology) were proud to be part of this year's **Epsom Derby** Festival. Our Travel and Tourism students were once again 'Racemakers' and our Animal Management students presented personalised handmade plaques to the grooms of the Betfred Derby runners.

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NESCOT on Reigate Road, Ewell is the location for a local HUSTINGS, staged by Epsom and Ewell Times, for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates in the Adrian Mann Theatre at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

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Our Travel and Tourism Level 2 and 3 students were part of the 'Racemaker' team on 31 May and 1 June. They used skills developed within their course to assist visitors with directions and queries, helping to ensure an excellent experience was had by all. The students benefitted from both, the preparation and employment during the event. The experience has allowed them to develop their academic and transferrable skills, from CV development to interviews and onsite advice and guidance with Epsom Downs Racecourse. They received training on the various enquiries they might receive including how to effectively deal with a range of customer service scenarios.

A team of four of our Level 2 and 3 Animal Management students also presented unique mementos made from wood off

cuts that bore the names of the horses running in the Derby. These personalised and handmade plaques were presented to each groom. The students were chosen for their consistent hard work and involvement in sustainability projects as part of their course.

**Julie Kapsalis**, Principal and CEO of Nescot, said, “We are proud of our involvement at the Betfred Derby Festival. Thanks to our staff for creating these collaborative opportunities and to our students for being excellent ambassadors for the College. It has been an incredible experience for them to be part of an internationally renowned premier racing event.

“We are hugely appreciative of Epsom Down Racecourse for inviting our students to be part of this prestigious event. Working with businesses and the community is important to us as a college and we look forward to our continued partnership that will enrich our learners with practical experiences to prepare them for their careers.”

**Jennifer Fasad** and **Jemma Brodie**, Travel and Tourism lecturers at Nescot also expressed their gratitude. They said, “A huge thank you to the team at Epsom Downs Racecourse who ensured a comprehensive training programme was given to all learners involved. The opportunity to gain first hand customer service skills at an event of this scale offers them an all-important experience as they consider career paths in the travel, hospitality and events industry.”

**Zoe Brown**, Head of Curriculum, Animal Studies, commented, “Our students were thrilled with the invitation to go behind the scenes in the stables area and meet the people who care for the horses. It’s been an amazing experience for them. Thanks to Epsom Downs Racecourse for organising this opportunity. We are delighted that the personalised plaques were well received and we’ve been asked to provide them next year too.”

**Tom Sammes**, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said “We were pleased to offer students from Nescot the opportunity to be part of the ‘Racemaker’ team at the Betfred Derby Festival. Their enthusiasm and commitment to learn and execute their roles is commendable, and the whole team were professional and dedicated across the two days.

“We were also delighted to help the students present the beautifully designed plaques to the grooms of the Betfred Derby runners and want to thank them for their hard work in the build up to the event.

“Epsom Downs Racecourse is looking forward to offering a range of different projects to support study programmes for young people throughout the rest of the year. Nescot is a huge part of the local community, and we want to help them continue to make a positive impact on the young people that come through their doors.”

Travel and Tourism student Frankie said, “We had such a great time working as part of the Racemaker Team. The guidance and the allocation of roles and locations was clear and organised. This opportunity has allowed me to develop my leadership skills. I was proud to be placed on the radio as a team leader during the second day.”

Another student Josh added, “It was an amazing experience! Helping customers has developed my confidence. I had some fantastic personal moments and even had the opportunity to see the beautiful race horses in the winner enclosure.”

This is the second year that our Travel and Tourism students have worked alongside The Jockey Club as part of the Beacon Project that was set up in in Autumn 2022. This collaboration offers our students work experience opportunities with various projects at Epsom Downs Racecourse to aid with their studies and understanding of the racing industry and career opportunities it presents.

Nescot’s Travel and Tourism students as part of the ‘Racemaker’ team at Epsom Downs Racecourse for the Betfred Derby Festival along with Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO. Photo credit: Nescot

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## Computer’s gift of a Trojan Horse?

8 August 2024



The computer won the Derby! On the eve of yesterday’s famous Epsom flat race Epsom and Ewell Times published winner tips Los Angeles from Royal Ascot Odds and first to cross the finishing line **City of Troy** from a super-computer. What other gifts for humanity might be brought by AI?

An Epsom and Ewell Times reader put £50 on both tips and came away with a £100 profit thanks to the brain-power of a super-computer. He said “One swallow does not make a summer. So, I won’t be inclined to follow computer tips every time but thanks for this one”

No Royal could be spotted on Epsom Downs this Derby Day but our own leading citizen Mayor **Steve Bridger** and Mayoress Carol Bridger took centre stage in the Royal Box of The Queen’s Stand. Another Epsom and Ewell highlight was **Helin Konyar** a Ukraine scholar of the local **Laine Theatre Arts** leading the National Anthem just before the Derby stakes. The King and Queen attended Oaks Day on Friday.



Students of Epsom's Laine Theatre Arts. Helin Konyar front row centre in yellow dress.

City Of Troy (3-1 Favourite) banished the memory of his disappointing run in the QIPCO 2000 Guineas with a breathtaking performance to clinch victory in the 245th Betfred Derby at Epsom Downs today.

The colt, sired by Justify, secured a record-extending 10th win in this prestigious Classic for his trainer Aidan O'Brien, while jockey Ryan Moore celebrated his fourth Derby triumph.

City Of Troy, racing on the inside, was settled towards the rear among the 16 runners as stablemates Euphoric and Los Angeles led the field.

Rounding Tattenham Corner, City Of Troy began to make an impressive move, surging to the front in the final quarter mile. He maintained his momentum, finishing strongly to fend off Ambiente Friendly by two and three-quarter lengths, with Los Angeles trailing three and a quarter lengths behind in third.



The Derby jockeys. Epsom Racecourse 1st June 2024 c. Epsom and Ewell Times

"It was hard to know what would happen today, but I was very sure we still had the best horse before the race," Ryan Moore said to ITV Racing. "Newmarket... it didn't happen. I can't pretend that we knew it would happen [today], but we do know that he has a big engine, he showed himself to be a brilliant two-year-old. The Guineas... we got a few things wrong. But it's great that he could come back today. He's still a little bit immature, that's the first time he's run around a bend, hopefully there's plenty more to work with."

Moore reflected on the race's turning point, stating, "We did a few things wrong at Newmarket, today we rectified it and put it right."

On the sensation of guiding City Of Troy through the final stages, Moore said, "He was going to win very easily. With the

loose horse in front of him, he was still a bit unsure, and then he galloped out strong. He quickened well and then kind of waited, you have to be delighted with what he has done today.”

“I had to find a little bit of room. The race kind of opened up, loose horse in there, he travelled well into the straight, and he picked up and went to the front very easily and very quickly,” Moore recounted. “Then I felt he was still a little bit inexperienced, with the loose horse in front of him he wasn’t quite sure what to do – he was pricking his ears, then he changed his leads near the line and went on again. I’m just delighted that a horse who showed so much as a two-year-old – he was very good at two – and the Guineas, we got a few things wrong on the day and it’s great that Aidan’s got him back and brought him here today. He didn’t lose faith in the horse, stuck to the plan and it has paid off. We believed that if he turned up like we thought he would, he’d be too good for them, and he was.

“I was always happy where I was. It’s never going to be 100% smooth with a field that size, where we were, but I was able to pick a path. He took me there early and easily, and the race was over and he was in control of it a fair way out.

“He’s special – he won the Dewhurst, won a Group Two as early as July, won the Dewhurst, then to come here, and it’s the first time he’s been round a bend, and obviously it’s a big step up in trip. We thought he was the sort of horse, and once again Aidan’s brought him here, he’s turned up and it all worked out great,” Moore concluded to ITV Racing.

Epsom Downs witnessed a remarkable performance today, marking yet another chapter in the illustrious careers of City Of Troy, Aidan O’Brien, and Ryan Moore.

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## Human versus computer tips for Derby winner

8 August 2024



One of the biggest Flat races of the season arrives at Epsom Downs on Saturday afternoon as the £1.5 million Epsom Derby takes centre stage in the sporting world.

The Group 1 contest, open to three-year-old horses only, is run over the 1m4f distance at the track, and in 2024, 16 runners have been declared for the showpiece race to battle it out for the £882,408 top prize at 4:30 on Saturday.

Many eyes will be focused on City Of Troy, trained by Ballydoyle maestro Aidan O’Brien, who looked like a world-class prospect as a two-year-old before being well-beaten at odds-on in the 2000 Guineas to start his three-year-old campaign. O’Brien won this race last year with Auguste Rodin, who also flopped in the Guineas before bouncing back, but City of Troy hasn’t got the best stall draw from stall number one, which has seen his odds drift slightly.

Another O’Brien runner, **Los Angeles**, could be the play in the Derby. A winner of the Group 1 Criterium de Saint-Cloud back in October, he backed that up with a win in the Derby Trial at Leopardstown on May 12 and will relish the step up in trip at Epsom.

Away from the Irish challengers, Macduff for trainer Ralph Beckett is expected to be in contention. Fourth in the Royal Lodge on his final start as a two-year-old, he returned at three with a decent second to Arabian Crown in the Sandown Classic Trial and is another who will enjoy the further trip.

Trainer Andrew Balding is no stranger to having big-priced runners go well in this race and he has an outside chance with Sayedaty Sadaty, runner-up in Listed races at Newcastle and Newmarket this session but could well take a giant leap forward here. Sea The Stars won the Derby in 2009 and Bellum Justum, one of his offspring, could pose a real threat for Balding, with top-jockey Oisín Murphy on board.

Before the big one, however, there is no shortage of action elsewhere on the Epsom card with another seven races on offer, kicking off at 1:25 with a Class 2 handicap over the 1m2f trip. Balding could get the card off to a perfect start for him with Portsmouth, scoring in fine style at Epsom in the season opener last month and backed it up with a runner-up finish at Goodwood.

Nine runners will take on the Group 3 Princess Elizabeth Stakes, race two on the Epsom card, at 2:00. Preference is for Dahlia Stakes runner-up Running Lion, who is down in class and she should take plenty of beating. The progressive Sparks Fly, who excelled as a three-year-old, rates as the main danger, very much up in class but wasn’t disgraced in handicap company at Haydock on seasonal return.

The third race on the card (2:35) is the Group 3 Diomed Stakes. Of the eight runners tackling the extended mile distance, Embesto for trainer Roger Varian is taken to get the better of last year’s winner Regal Reality, who is back for more this weekend and also cannot be ruled out having placed in both starts this year.

The lead-up to the Derby cranks up with the five-furlong “Dash” at 3:10 for three-year-olds, and a whopping field of 20 will head to the start. Due For Luck is back on track this season having finished a neck third at Chester last time out to rediscover some form. Another who can bounce back is Vince L’Amour, a winner of a pair of handicaps at Ripon and

Catterick last month and was a strong second when up in grade at Chester but bombed out last time around at York. Grandlad and Knicks, both winners last time out, are also ones to keep an eye on in a very competitive Dash.

Clarendon House should be too strong for his rivals in the second "Dash" on the card at 3:45, a winner at York just over a fortnight ago from the re-opposing Looking For Lynda. Sylkie Wilie rates the chief threat, however, handily weighted for this one having not won in 14 outings but was runner-up in this race last year and arrives off the back of a fifth of 15 in a Musselburgh handicap.

The Derby takes all the attention at 4:30 before two further races wrap up the Derby meeting for 2024. It's tough to look past Ziggy in the Class 2 handicap (5:15), who returned from 15 months off with a second at Epsom's season opener. In the finale (5:50), the selection is for Mr Wagyu, who is taken to kick on with his superb record in this race having won it in 2022 and was third last year.

## Epsom selections - Saturday from Royal Ascot Odds

1:25 - Portsmouth  
2:00 - Running Lion  
2:35 - Embesto  
3:10 - Vince L'Amour  
3:45 - Clarendon House  
4:30 - **Los Angeles**  
5:15 - Ziggy  
5:50 - Mr Wagyu

## SuperComputer Predictions

**City of Troy** has been given a staggering 29.9% chance of winning the 2024 Epsom Derby on Saturday, according to the Best Payout Online Slots SuperComputer.

The SuperComputer is created by generating a specific code, which simulates the race 1,000 times, after being fed information relating to factors such as conditions, weight, jockey, trainer, and form, as well as betting market odds.

With the going officially declared as Good to Soft for the big day itself, the Aidan O'Brien-trained City of Troy has emerged as the huge favorite for the race, with a win percentage chance of 29.9%.

In second place is Ancient Wisdom at 11.8% and then Dancing Gemini at 10.2%. However, the chances of Ambiente Friendly also making a late surge for top spot are just 10.1% as well.

A spokesperson for Best Payout Online Slots said:

"Sports fans have throughout history relied on their 'gut feeling' or 'instinct' to make predictions for a season, which can certainly be blighted by personal preferences or bias. However, the Best Payout Online Slots SuperComputer aims to remove the sentiment and emotions of predictions and instead replace these inexact methods with logical and intelligent predictions relying on data. By creating the code, we can simulate the race and create as accurate a model as possible - leading to the final matrix of positions we see above."

## How does the SuperComputer work?

The SuperComputer is a probability model, not determined by human predictions or bias. What happens is the SuperComputer estimates the outcome of the race based on a horse's current strength (based on factors such as conditions, weight, jockey, trainer, and form) and betting market odds.

The machine then simulates the remaining games in a season 1,000 times and constructs an average league table from the 1,000 simulations, to rule out anomalous results.

# Top Tips for Oaks Day at Epsom Racecourse

8 August 2024



One of the biggest Flat race meetings of the British racing calendar is upon us as day one of the Derby meeting gets underway at Epsom Downs today.

The seven-race card has more than £1million in prize money up for grabs as the big gun trainers send their stars to Surrey for one of the most prestigious race days of the season.

The £550,000 Group 1 Betfred Oaks is the highlight on day one but not far behind that is the another Group 1, the Coronation Cup, with a prize pot of £445,000 up for grabs.

The Epsom card on Friday gets underway with the Woodcote Stakes (2.00), a six-furlong contest in class two for the two-year-old's. New Charter looked a handy type for trainer Richard Hannon when chasing home a current Royal Ascot favourite at Newmarket a fortnight ago and is taken to go one better at Epsom, but will face stern competition from Teej A, who won her maiden at Chester in fine fashion and will be bang up there once again.

The second race of the day is off at 2.35 and is a class two handicap over the extended mile trip, with 16 runners set to head to the starting stalls. Preference in this one goes Bopedro ahead of stablemate at David O'Meara's yard Blue For You, who finished third and fourth respectively in a handicap at York's Dante meeting earlier this month and both should improve at Epsom.

The first Group 1 on the card is race three at 3.10 - the Coronation Cup - and a small field of five will battle it out for the £252,360 first prize. Defending champion Emily Upjohn, trained by John and Thady Gosden, is back for more in 2024 and is the one to beat over the 1m4f trip once again. Luxembourg, a four-time Group 1 winner for master trainer Aidan O'Brien, rates as the obvious danger but needs to bounce back from a poor showing in the Dubai Turf at Meydan last time out. Feed The Flame is an intriguing runner in this one as well, heading over from France for trainer Pascal Bary having finished third of nine in the Prix Gany at Longchamps and connections opting to throw him into a Group 1 on British debut.

Fourteen runners look set for the start in race four of the cracking Epsom card on Friday at 3.45 - the Nifty 50 handicap - over the 1m2f distance. Ben Brookhouse's I Still Have Faith shaped well on seasonal reappearance at Nottingham after a fine 2023 campaign and is taken to score a fifth career win ahead of two Karl Burke runners in Bolster in Liberty Lane, who both won last time they were on track and will have plenty to say in proceedings.

The Group 1 Betfred Oaks is the feature race on day one at Epsom (4.30) and this year's renewal looks a belter, with £311,905 heading the way of the winner. That could well be Ylang Ylang for trainer O'Brien, who was a promising fifth in the first classic of the season in the 1000 Guineas at Newmarket and should relish the step up in trip here for a yard looking for a seventh win in the race since 2015.

Cheshire Oaks winner Forest Fairy looks to be a main player in the Oaks for trainer Ralph Beckett, who is no stranger to success in this race having won it with Look Here in 2008 and Talent in 2013, while Irish trainer Dermot Weld also has a live chance with Ezeliya, who has two wins from three starts and recently scored in a Group 3 at Navan.

After the big one, there are two more races on the Epsom card for punters to find a winner. The Listed Surrey Stakes (5.10) can go the way of Balmacara, trained by Eve Johnson-Houghton, who was a ready winner at Doncaster just over a month ago in a novice stakes contest.

Finally, the day one card comes to a close at 5.40 with the 12-runner class two handicap over the seven furlong trip and preference in the finale goes to the Roger Varian-trained Mission To Moon, who returned from a seven-month absence to score in fine style at Goodwood a month ago and is bred from a family who gets better with age.

*Epsom selections - Friday (via **Royal Ascot odds**)*

2.00 - New Charter

2.35 - Bopedro

3.10 - Emily Upjohn

3.45 - I Still Have Faith

4.30 - Forest Fairy

5.10 - Balmacara

5.40 - Mission To Moon

Copy provided by BoyleSports

## Should the Epsom Derby go back to Wednesday?

8 August 2024



The first Wednesday of June used to be for many an unofficial bank holiday. Office, retail and factory staff parties filled **Epsom Downs** enjoying a day off and the annual **Epsom Derby** flat-race. The Epsom High Street shops used to close.

Of course, this year the Epsom Derby will take place on Saturday 1st June and the shops will remain very much open.

In a bold statement aimed at reviving the charm and prominence of the Epsom Derby, retired jockey **Dane O'Neill** has

suggested returning the event to its traditional Wednesday slot. This proposal comes in light of apparent declining attendances and the Derby's diminishing distinctiveness against competitors like Royal Ascot.

O'Neill was speaking to Boyle Sports, who offer the latest odds for the Epsom Derby event, said "I think they have messed things up by moving it around a lot, and as a result has lost its identity for the wider public. We have seen it under several different guises. For the aficionado it is always going to be the Epsom Derby, one of the mainstays of English racing, but they have changed it so much that it has lost its spark."

For much of the 20th century, the Epsom Derby was synonymous with the first Wednesday in June. This midweek scheduling created a unique atmosphere, drawing massive crowds not only for the race but also for a festive day out. Historically, even Parliament would adjourn to allow members to attend, highlighting the event's national significance.

However, in 1995, the race was moved to Saturday in a bid to boost attendances and television ratings, a decision that has since been met with mixed reactions.

The switch to Saturday was intended to increase visibility and attendance, capitalizing on the weekend's leisure time. Yet, O'Neill and other critics argue that this move has diluted the Derby's unique character, making it just another event in a crowded sporting calendar. O'Neill believes that returning to a Wednesday would help restore the Derby's distinctiveness and might reignite public interest by creating a midweek spectacle that stands out on its own.

Epsom's course is renowned for its challenging nature, likened by O'Neill to a rollercoaster ride with its steep climbs and sharp turns, particularly at Tattenham Corner. This distinctive track demands exceptional skill from both horse and jockey, adding to the race's allure and prestige.

The Derby remains a cornerstone of English flat racing, celebrated for its history and the high calibre of competition it attracts.

Do you have a view? Write to our letters page.

Images credit: @EpsomRacecourse