

Epsom racing season springs into action

29 April 2026



Epsom Racecourse report: Spring Meeting kicks off the new season as trainers John and Thady Gosden land a double on the day - including a potential Derby runner shortening in price after Trial victory

The new Flat campaign is off and running at Epsom after its Spring Meeting took place on Tuesday and yielded a double on the day for the Gosden's, who saw one of their winners cut in price for the Derby.

Saxon Street maintained his unbeaten record when landing the Listed Blue Riband Trial on Tuesday's card and has seen his price more than halve to land the Derby at the same track on June 6.

Read below for a full report of the Epsom card courtesy of *Sporting Life*.

Up first on the card was a mile novice stakes and the Gosdens landed the opener with Runman, another to maintain a perfect record in his career when landing the contest by a length and three quarters as a very prohibitive 1-12 favourite under jockey Oisin Murphy.

The mile and a quarter Blue Riband train was up next which was won by Saxon Street for Team Gosden, with William Buick riding this time, scoring by two and a half lengths from Rebel Rocker in second. Odds-on favourite New Zealand for Aidan O'Brien finished down the field in fourth.

Another mile and a quarter contest was up next at 3.15 and Rathgar landed the spoils here for trainer Jack Channon and jockey Tom Marquand, scoring by a length from 5-2 favourite Sallaal in second with the winner making all and always looking on top of proceedings.

A field of five tackled the mile and a half handicap in class three up next, where trainer Ian Williams picked up a win with Night Breeze ridden by Rossa Ryan - who landed a double of his own on the card - by a comfortable three lengths as Night Breeze landed the win just four days after finishing fourth at Musselburgh.

Ryan picked up a second win in succession when piloting On Message (2-1) to victory in the mile and a half a furlong class four handicap, another cosy winner by two lengths for trainer Ralph Beckett, while the finale of the afternoon (4.58) went the way of Shafdar, a three quarters of a length winner at odds of 15/2 to bag a second winner on the card for trainer Williams.

Epsom results - Tuesday

2.05 - Runman (1-12F)

2.40 - Saxon Street (5-2)

3.15 - Rathgar (3-1)

3.50 - Night Breeze (5-2)

4.23 - On Message (2-1)

4.58 - Shafdar (15-2)

Horses racing Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

Epsom Racecourse: preview and tips for today's opening Spring Meeting

29 April 2026



The Flat season at Epsom is back as the Spring Meeting, the traditional season opener at the track, arrives this afternoon. Six races are slated for the card, kicking off at 2.05pm with a novice stakes in class four before ending at 4.58pm as a field of ten heads to the stalls for the mile handicap in class four.

*Read below for a full rundown of the Epsom card on Tuesday courtesy of Racing TV, who have the very latest **free bets** offers throughout the Flat season.*

Runman looks very much the way to go in the opening race of the new season at Epsom (2.05) as nine runners take on the novice stakes in class four over the mile trip. The John and Thady Gosden-trained runner was a winner at Salisbury on debut in October and under top jockey Oisin Murphy, is very hard to oppose here to follow up.

The Listed Blue Riband Trial Stakes is up next at 2.40 with a handy £34,026 going to the winner. Of the six runners, it is tough to look past Frankel colt New Zealand for the all-conquering duo of Aidan O'Brien and Ryan Moore, last seen when finishing fifth behind stablemate Puerto Rico in the Group 1 Criterion at Saint-Cloud but only by three lengths, while New Zealand has Group 1 entries further down the track this season including in the English and Irish Derby's so this could be a stepping stone to major success later in the year.

A class two handicap marks race three on the card (3.15) over the mile and a quarter distance. Aurel has had some time off since finishing seventh in the Golden Gate Stakes at Royal Ascot but was a fine winner at Leicester prior to that so a repeat of that previous form should see him go close here for the Ralph Beckett team.

A mile and a half handicap in class three is up next (3.50) and five runners are set to head to the stalls. Topteam has been very progressive for the Andrew Balding team, having resumed winning ways at Kempton on seasonal return and was a hat-trick winner last campaign so gets the vote in this one over Asgard's Captain, who won twice last year - one of those being in this exact race 12 months ago - for trainer Dylan Cunha.

Six runners will line up for the penultimate race of the Spring Meeting card at 4.23 where On Message could pick up a second winner on the card having got off the mark in good fashion at Wolverhampton in October and progress is expected here after now being sent handicapping for the prominent yard.

Finally, the card concludes at 4.58pm with a mile handicap in class four. Defending champion Tribal Rhythm is back for more having won this race 12 months ago for the Denis Coakley team. He could be a good shout to repeat the trick 12 months on with Oisin Murphy booked to ride following an encouraging second on his seasonal reappearance at Bath 23 days ago.

Epsom selections - Tuesday

2.05 - Runman

2.40 - New Zealand

3.15 - Aurel

3.50 - Topteam

4.23 - On Message

4.58 - Tribal Rhythm

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

Epsom Oddballs Bring Back the 2000 Perch as Beloved Local Race Returns

29 April 2026



Epsom Oddballs Running Club is bringing back a much-loved local race this summer, as the 2000 Perch returns to Epsom Downs after years away from the Surrey running calendar.

Set for Friday 26 June 2026, with a 7pm evening start at Epsom Downs Racecourse, the revived event aims to capture the spirit of the original Perch races while introducing a refreshed format suited to today's runners. Open to all levels, the race will cover a 10km single-lap route across the Downs, combining scenic views with a gently challenging profile.

The "Perch" takes its name from an old English unit of measurement—2000 perch equates to just over six miles—reflecting the distance of earlier editions that were popular throughout the 2000s. Those races, held on Epsom Downs and in Nonsuch Park, built a loyal following among local runners.

In its 2026 return, the race has been extended to 10km, but organisers say the essence remains the same. The focus is still on accessibility, community, and showcasing the natural beauty of the area.

The race begins and ends inside Epsom Racecourse near Tattenham Corner, taking runners on a loop that is approximately 70% off-road. After heading west along the racecourse railings, participants join Chalk Lane and Grandstand Road before moving into open downland.

The route passes through bridleways towards Langley Vale, dips slightly, then climbs steadily through the village edge and into the peaceful Langley Vale Centenary Wood. From there, runners loop back north, tackling a longer incline near Epsom Lane North before returning across the Downs. A final downhill stretch brings competitors back into the racecourse for the finish.

Organisers describe the route as “undulating but very runnable,” making it suitable for both seasoned athletes and newcomers to mixed-terrain racing.

The return of the 2000 Perch is as much about community as it is about competition. The club is currently working with local businesses and organisations to support the event through sponsorship, prizes and race-day assistance.

Organisers say they are keen to involve as many local partners as possible, helping to re-establish the Perch as a key fixture in the area’s sporting and social calendar.

Early bird entry is open until 30 April 2026, priced at £22 for affiliated runners and £24 for unaffiliated runners. Standard race rules apply.

Book here: <https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/EpsomOddballs2000Perch2026>

Get Involved with Epsom Oddballs: Try before you join, everyone is welcome to attend a couple of free, coached training sessions with no commitment. For more information, prospective members can contact the Membership Secretary at membershipsecretary@epsomoddballs.org

Romy Sustar



Freelance journalist | SIA-certified | Covering crime & community safety.

Email: romana.epsomandewelltimes@gmail.com LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/romanasustar/>

X: @RomanaSustar

.
. .
. .
. .

Epsom & Ewell Through to Cup Quarter-Finals After Shoot-Out Drama

29 April 2026



Epsom & Ewell FC Sunday progressed to the quarter-finals of the Combined Counties Premier Challenge Cup after a tense 0-0 draw with Sutton Common Rovers was settled by a composed 5-3 penalty shoot-out victory at Chalky Lane. The win sets up a Saturday away tie at Abbey Rangers.

There were several changes from the final league fixture of the season. Kit Fletcher returned in goal following injury, while Stefan Aiwone slotted into the back line in place of the injured Tom Collins. In midfield, captain Brendan Murphy-McVey continued his partnership with Callum O’Keeffe, and Craig Dundas came in for the cup-tied Courtney Swaby.

The opening half was evenly contested, with both sides creating chances but neither able to take control. The Salts appeared the more organised of the two, moving the ball with greater fluency and showing more attacking intent, yet the breakthrough proved elusive and the match remained goalless at the interval.

A similar pattern followed after the break, although Epsom & Ewell began to assert greater pressure. Several promising opportunities came and went as the home side spent long spells on the front foot, but the final touch was missing. With neither side able to find a winner, the tie was ultimately decided from the penalty spot.

Epsom & Ewell were clinical in the shoot-out. Brendan Murphy-McVey, Ryley Merrett and Toby Young all converted confidently, while Sutton Common Rovers missed one of their attempts. Substitute Karl Bailey then scored to maintain the perfect record before Ali Fofahan stepped up to convert the decisive penalty.

With five successful strikes and just a single miss from their opponents, the Salts secured a deserved 5-3 shoot-out victory and a place in the next round.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



Epsom and Ewell FC's winning streak continues

29 April 2026



Epsom & Ewell signed off their league campaign in positive fashion with a narrow but well-earned 1-0 victory over Tadley Calleva at Chalky Lane on 14th April.

With several changes to the starting line-up, the Salts were forced to adapt. Goalkeeper Kit Fletcher was absent through injury, handing Faebian Witter a start, while Tom Collins dropped into central defence alongside stand-in captain Toby Young and Prince Aderogba. In midfield, Ore Allen partnered Ryley Merrett, and up front Ali Fofahan and Karl Bailey led the attack, with Brendan Murphy-McVey rested.

Epsom began on the front foot and looked the more purposeful side early on, but their rhythm was disrupted midway through the first half when Collins was forced off with a groin injury. Leo Cunningham replaced him, prompting a reshuffle in both personnel and shape. Despite the disruption, the hosts maintained the greater attacking intent, though the sides went in level at the break.

The second half followed a similar pattern, with Epsom pressing for a breakthrough. Their best chance fell to Courtney Swaby, whose powerful effort crashed back off the crossbar. The introduction of debutant Joshua Arthur in the 70th minute injected fresh energy into the attack and would prove decisive.

With the match seemingly heading for a stalemate, a late error from the Tadley goalkeeper in the 89th minute handed Arthur his moment. Reacting quickest, he calmly slotted into an empty net to seal victory and mark his debut in memorable fashion.

The win secured a third consecutive home clean sheet and ensured Epsom & Ewell finished the season in 13th place. Back-to-back victories against play-off-bound sides provided a strong finish and underlined clear progress compared to last season.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



Fleet of foot Epsom and Ewell FC speed to victory

29 April 2026



Epsom & Ewell made it back-to-back 3-0 home victories with an impressive and controlled performance against play-off chasing Fleet Town at Chalky Lane on Saturday 11th April.

Facing a side now managed by a former Epsom boss, this result carried added satisfaction for the hosts. The Salts named an unchanged squad but were forced into a late reshuffle when Kionte Gillfillian-Waul was delayed in arriving. Jason Vincent stepped into the starting XI, while Callum O'Keeffe again showed his versatility by filling in at left-back, allowing Tom Collins to move into midfield.

Epsom & Ewell started on the front foot, immediately putting Fleet under pressure and setting the tone for the match. Their bright opening was rewarded in the 12th minute when Callum Wilson rose highest to meet a Brendan Murphy-McVey corner, powering a header into the net at the back post to give the hosts a deserved lead. The Salts continued to dictate the play for the remainder of the first half, restricting Fleet's chances while posing the greater attacking threat.

The second half followed a similar pattern, with Epsom & Ewell remaining organised and patient in possession. Their control was eventually rewarded in the 74th minute when Jason Vincent doubled the advantage, producing a superb volley from another Murphy-McVey delivery to give the hosts breathing space.

There was still time to add further gloss to the scoreline. In the 88th minute, substitute Ore Allen applied the finishing touch, lifting a delicate low chip over the goalkeeper after a trademark mazy run from Courtney Swaby.

Three goals, three points and another clean sheet marked a superb home display and a statement victory against strong opposition.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



Alton altercation gives Epsom and Ewell FC 3 -0 win

29 April 2026



Epsom & Ewell FC secured their Step 5 status with a composed and disciplined 3-0 victory over Alton FC at Chalky Lane on 7 April in the Combined Counties Premier Division South.

There were two changes from the side that faced Sutton Common Rovers. Tom Collins returned in place of Jason Vincent, who dropped to the bench, while Ali Fofahan came into the starting line-up after missing the previous fixture due to travel issues.

The first half produced few clear-cut chances, although the Salts controlled much of the play and looked the more assured side in possession. Their best moments came through sustained pressure rather than individual openings. Alton's only real threat came just before the interval, forcing a scrambling clearance off the line and a save from Kit Fletcher. The sides went in level at the break.

The second half belonged to the hosts. Their intent was clear from the restart, and the breakthrough came on 54 minutes. Stefan Aiwone made a powerful run through midfield before being brought down just outside the area. Tom Collins' free-kick was blocked by the wall but fell kindly to Callum Wilson, who guided the ball home to give Epsom the lead.

From there, the Salts managed the game with maturity, restricting Alton to half-chances while steadily increasing the pressure. The reward came late on. Courtney Swaby struck on 89 minutes to double the advantage before adding a second moments later, finishing confidently from a Kionte Gillfillian-Waul through ball to seal the result.

A clean sheet, three goals and — most importantly — the points that mathematically guarantee survival. The victory lifts Epsom & Ewell several places up the table, adding extra gloss to a night that felt like a turning point for the club.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



Stable Visit Opens Doors on Epsom Downs

29 April 2026



Residents were given a rare glimpse behind the scenes of one of Epsom's most picturesque racing yards as a community visit brought locals face-to-face with the daily life of a professional training stable.

Around 30 racing enthusiasts gathered on Epsom Downs for an exclusive morning at the yard of trainer George Baker, with the early mist still hanging over the gallops as the visit began. The event was organised by Councillor Steven McCormick, Chair of the Epsom Downs Conservators, with support from fellow Conservator Councillor Kim Spickett.

Guests were welcomed inside the stable gates for a guided tour led by Candida Baker, who offered an engaging insight into the routines, challenges and traditions of the yard. The visit revealed not only the meticulous care given to each horse but also the individual personalities that make up a working stable.

The highlight of the morning came as the group moved out to the fibre sand gallop, where they watched horses thunder past at full speed. Standing trackside, visitors experienced first-hand the power and elegance that define training on the Downs.

The visit also served as a reminder of the deep historical roots of horse racing in Epsom. Councillor Kim Spickett said the morning demonstrated how local traditions continue to be preserved in active use, describing the stables as "living museums" connecting the present to centuries of heritage.

Councillor McCormick added that events like this are about bringing the community closer to what makes Epsom unique, highlighting the importance of maintaining a connection between residents and the Downs.

Further visits are already planned, with the next taking place at Michael Attwater's yard on April 11th. Spaces are limited and expected to fill quickly, with booking available via Eventbrite. A subsequent visit to Craig Benton's yard is scheduled for April 18th

Attwater Racing

- Date: April 11th
- Location: Attwater Racing, Epsom
- Host: Organised by Cllr Steven McCormick & Cllr Kim Spickett

How to Book:

Spaces are strictly limited and fill up fast. To secure your place for the April 11th visit

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1986793626219?aff=oddtcreator>

Craig Benton - April 18th

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1986793958212?aff=oddtcreator>

Contact: Councillor Steven McCormick stevenjmccormick@yahoo.co.uk

.
. .
. .
. .
. .
. .
. .
. .
. .
. .

Penalty Drama Caps Epsom Salts' Triumph

29 April 2026



Epsom & Ewell FC 2 v Guildford City 1 - Combined Counties Premier Division South- 28th March -Spectrum Football Ground

Epsom & Ewell went into the match knowing that victory would secure a finish above Guildford City and complete a league double over their opponents — adding further importance to an already significant fixture. Kit Fletcher returned in goal, while Jason Vincent came into the starting line-up in place of Craig Dundas, who moved to the bench, in what was otherwise a settled side.

The Salts began brightly, moving the ball well and creating several promising attacking moments in the opening stages. However, the rhythm of the game was disrupted by extreme weather conditions, with snow, hail and heavy rain all making an appearance and turning it into a typically challenging afternoon.

A major moment came on 30 minutes when Antonios Nazareth suffered a serious fall that forced him to leave the field and be taken to hospital. The incident understandably affected the tempo of the match, and neither side was able to establish control before the interval, with the teams going in level at 0-0.

Epsom & Ewell emerged for the second half with renewed intent and made the breakthrough just two minutes after the restart. Courtney Swaby finished well to give the Salts the lead, celebrating with his trademark flips and lifting the home support.

The Salts continued to press and looked the more likely to add a second. Substitute Craig Dundas had a golden opportunity late on to seal the game but was unable to convert, leaving the contest finely balanced heading into the closing stages. Football, as ever, had a twist. Former Salts player Kallum Peart struck in the 88th minute to bring Guildford City level and set up a tense finale.

Deep into stoppage time, in the seventh minute of added time, the referee pointed to the spot. Up stepped substitute Ali Fofahan, who confidently converted the penalty to secure all three points for Epsom & Ewell. It was a match that had everything — difficult conditions, a serious injury, late drama and a display of real character from the Salts. A deserved and memorable victory.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



Epsom's Rainbow Centre former operators drive up

Leatherhead Leisure Centre visitor numbers

29 April 2026



BBC reports: Visitor numbers are booming at Leatherhead Leisure Centre on the back of major investment to rebuild the site's reputation, staffing, and facilities. GLL Leisure (former Rainbow Centre contractors) took over management of the centre last year - which at the time had just three full-time staff. Knowing this would be a major issue, the company began recruitment months before the contract took over - leading to it having full management staffing from day one. That, and investing "well over" what they bid on refurbishing the site, together with timetabling tweaks, has seen memberships soar with almost double the amount of visits on last year.

The encouraging figures were presented by GLL Leisure staff to Mole Valley District Council's March 24 external scrutiny committee. The first phase had been to turn the ship and rebuild reputations. They said: "Leatherhead Leisure Centre had a poor reputation under the previous leisure contractor in respect that the building had deteriorated - and the preservation of the building was the first priority. We also wanted to make sure that we had enough staff to run the building as previously there was a lack of staff. There were literally two lifeguards that we took on and one manager."

So far the numbers have shown the effort has been worthwhile with memberships at Leatherhead at 4,600 - up 1,800 in just a single year. Visitor numbers soared as well from 260,000 per year in 2024 to 508,000 last year. They believe a similar approach at Dorking Leisure Centre - which GLL Leisure also run, should see similar results.

They added: "We knew Leatherhead was a destination many many years ago and we wanted to get that back. We invested well over what we put in the bid but we had real confidence that it was going to work, and it really has. A lot of people have come from private health clubs to come and use the leisure centre, as part of the new gym development so that's a real good indicator that people are coming back to public centres rather than spending over the top on private health club provisions."

Chris Caulfield LDRS

Image: Leatherhead Leisure Centre (Image Google)

Related reports:

[Epsom's Rainbow Leisure Centre Places new operators](#)

[Gold star at the end of the Rainbow](#)

[Pot of gold for Rainbow?](#)

["It's my meeting": Cllr Dallen stops questions about his role in alleged Rainbow "cover-up".](#)

[Epsom and Ewell Council transparency row erupts as council backs publication of urgent decisions](#)

[Cllr Dallen accused of £1/2 m Epsom & Ewell Council cover-up](#)

GLL used to operate the Rainbow Centre but were replaced in October 2025 when Epsom and Ewell Borough Council awarded the contract to Places Leisure. In the coming weeks Epsom and Ewell Times hopes to complete an investigative report on circumstances surrounding the management contracts between Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and the Rainbow Centre operators.

Epsom Stung by Late Blow as Salts Denied by Handball Drama

29 April 2026



Epsom & Ewell FC 2 - Fleet Town FC 3. Combined Counties Premier League. Saturday 21st March. Easy as HGV Stadium.

The Salts were back in action for the fourth time in eight days, with another game looming on Tuesday, as they travelled to Calthorpe Park. Kit Lawrence-Fletcher returned in goal after being rested for the midweek cup tie. Callum Wilson and Antonios Nazareth came into central defence, replacing the ill Toby Young and Prince Aderogba, who dropped to the bench. Callum O'Keeffe returned to central midfield with Ore Allen unavailable, while Tom Collins and Craig Dundas completed a raft of changes to the starting line-up. Obasanjo Akinniranye was named among the substitutes, with Luke Miller not in the squad.

Epsom & Ewell made an energetic start, creating early chances and forcing Fleet's goalkeeper into action. Tom Collins should have opened the scoring in the opening minutes when clean through, but delayed his shot and was closed down by the keeper, who made a good save. The bright start was rewarded on 12 minutes when Courtney Swaby scored from a cross-come-shot that travelled across the box to give the Salts a deserved lead.

Fleet responded quickly. Charlie Postance equalised on 19 minutes, and just three minutes later Savio Shan completed the turnaround, leaving the Salts trailing despite their positive opening.

The second half began in disappointing fashion, with Fleet adding a third goal within a minute of the restart. However, Epsom & Ewell showed strong character and responded almost immediately. From a corner on 48 minutes, a goalmouth scramble saw substitute Zak Shabir head the ball back into the six-yard box, where Stefan Aiwone forced it home to reduce the deficit.

The Salts continued to press for an equaliser and maintained good attacking pressure throughout the half. Their efforts were nearly rewarded at the death, but a clear handball appeal in the Fleet penalty area from the final action of the game went unpunished by the referee, denying them a potential route back into the match.

Despite a committed performance, the Salts were left to rue a couple of soft goals and a key decision that went against them. With teams around them picking up points, Tuesday's trip to Chipstead and Saturday's visit to Guildford City now take on added importance in the push for the points needed to secure safety.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media



Junior golf booming at Epsom's Horton Golf Park as membership tops 300

29 April 2026



Junior golf is thriving in Epsom, with Horton Golf Park announcing that its junior membership has now surpassed 300 young players.

The milestone reflects a steady rise in participation among local families, with the venue becoming an increasingly popular destination for children and teenagers looking to take up the sport in a relaxed and accessible setting.

Set within the Horton Country Park estate, the facility offers a mix of golf opportunities suited to beginners and developing players alike. Its two courses — a full-length 18-hole course and a shorter 9-hole layout — alongside a floodlit driving range and practice areas, provide a flexible environment for juniors to learn and progress at their own pace.

The club's efforts have been formally recognised, with Horton Golf Park designated as a Junior Hub by England Golf and the UK Golf Federation. The status highlights its role in nurturing young talent and widening access to the game within the community.

Golf Operations lead Phill Wilmer, who works closely with many of the club's younger members, said the growth has been striking.

"It's fantastic to see so many young people enjoying golf and spending time at the club. Golf is a brilliant sport for developing confidence, patience and social skills, and we're proud to see so many local juniors embracing the game."

General Manager Gareth Bullock echoed that sentiment, pointing to the strong family appeal of the venue.

"We're incredibly proud to now have more than 300 junior members. It's great to see so many local children and families choosing Horton Golf Park as a place to play golf and spend time together."

Horton Golf Park has built its reputation on accessibility, offering affordable pay-and-play options alongside structured coaching programmes and junior pathways. Its informal, family-friendly ethos contrasts with more traditional private members' clubs, helping to break down barriers often associated with the sport.

With numbers continuing to rise, the club says it is keen to expand opportunities for young players even further, reinforcing its position as one of the borough's key grassroots sporting hubs.

Further details about junior membership and coaching opportunities can be found on the club's website.

Sam Jones - Reporter

