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Dan Jones Hat Trick Brings Christmas Cheer For Sutton & Epsom Rugby

22 December 2025

Sutton & Epsom RFC 61 Old Reigatian 17. Saturday 20th December.

On Saturday 6 January 2024 Old Reigatian had secured a hard-fought 28-26 victory over Old Colfeians to go top of Regional 2 South East. Since then, however, their form has faltered and they arrived at Rugby Lane still searching for a first league win of the campaign. Despite that, there was a degree of optimism for the visitors, with Sutton and Epsom themselves enduring a run of five straight defeats, albeit tempered by a remarkable ability to collect bonus points along the way. That run came to an emphatic end as the Black & Whites produced a dominant display, scoring nine tries in a 61-17 victory and leaving Old Reigatian rooted to the foot of the table over the Christmas period.

Kyren Ghumra and Kieran Finney returned to the Sutton and Epsom starting XV and, on a mild winter afternoon at Rugby Lane, Billy Egleton's whistle set the game in motion. Sutton and Epsom needed only three minutes to open the scoring. From a line-out, Rob Hegarty and Josh Rea carried into the 22 and Dan Jones was rewarded for his support play with the first of his three tries. Freddy Bunting converted. Five minutes later a charged-down clearance led to another Sutton and Epsom line-out on the 22, the forwards drove on before the backs were released and a set move created space for Ghumra to stroll in at the corner. Bunting's conversion from the touchline made it 14-0.

Old Reigatian briefly threatened a response after earning a line-out deep in the Sutton and Epsom 22, but a wayward pass squandered a rare opportunity. Sutton and Epsom immediately made them pay. Following a long clearance and penalty, a line-out 30 metres out saw Dan Johnson, Gareth O'Brien and Boaden carry strongly before Ghumra claimed his second try. Bunting added the extras for 21-0.

The first quarter ended with Sutton and Epsom claiming the bonus point. Adam Bibby countered deep into Reigatian territory, supported by Tom Lennard, and sustained pressure eventually saw lock Kieran Finney force his way over. Bunting converted for 28-0. On the half hour Hegarty made a trademark break from

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turnover ball and once again Jones was in perfect support, accelerating away to score from outside the 22. The conversion made it 35-0.

Old Reigatian were rewarded for their persistence just before the break. Playing their best rugby of the half, they earned successive penalties five metres out and lock Dan Grant eventually powered over. The conversion missed, making it 35-5. Sutton and Epsom responded immediately. Hegarty broke again and passed to Josh Rea, whose well-timed angle cut the defence before offloading to Sam Lennie. Hauled down short, the ball was recycled and Gareth O'Brien stepped through to score Sutton and Epsom's sixth. Bunting converted to give Sutton and Epsom a commanding 42-5 lead at half-time.

Any fears of a second-half collapse were quickly dispelled. Although Reigatian defended stoutly for the opening ten minutes, Sutton and Epsom's seventh try arrived from a five-metre line-out when Ewan McTaggart fed Dan Jones for his hat trick. Bunting converted for 49-5. The game opened up, and while Sutton and Epsom occasionally kicked possession away, they continued to dominate. Late in the third quarter, after Steve Munford gathered a loose ball following an ambitious Reigatian chip, sustained pressure ended with Tom Lennard scoring. The conversion was missed, leaving the score at 54-5.

With ten minutes remaining Sutton and Epsom added their ninth try. Sam Lennie, outstanding throughout, emerged from a mass of forwards to touch down, with Bunting converting for 61-5. Old Reigatian, however, showed commendable spirit. A loose pass on halfway was seized upon by scrum-half Jack Nicol, who ran in untouched, and although the conversion was missed it sparked renewed confidence. Moments later, slick handling saw Jonny Bridges score in the corner, with Conor Woods converting to make it 61-17.

A late yellow card for Ewan McTaggart gave the visitors a numerical advantage in their search for a bonus point, but no further scores followed. The final whistle confirmed a comprehensive Sutton and Epsom victory, capping an impressive all-round performance from the Black & Whites as they closed the year on a high. Sutton and Epsom will now hope to replicate last season's strong finish, with added incentive from a complex play-off system, while Old Reigatian continue their search for a first win.

The league now pauses for the Christmas break. Sutton and Epsom will reflect on an excellent early-season run before injuries and form intervened, and league action resumes on 10 January at Horn Park against Old Colfeians.

Sutton and Epsom: O'Brien, Scott, Bibby, Bunting (c), Ghumra, Lennard, Munford, Johnson, Lennie, Boaden, McTaggart, Finney, Rea, Jones, Hegarty. Replacements: Howes, Duey, Symonds.

Old Reigatian: Allen (c), Coyle, M. Nicol, Holder, Bridges, Woods, J. Nicol, Garrec, Nestor, Marshall, Grant, Franklin-Talbot, Pease, Bye, Mendoza. Replacements: Monk, Burton, Blake.

John Croysdill

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