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Epsom and Ewell FC on a friendly hat-trick.

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Following 2 wins out of 3 Epsom and Ewell FC went away to Dorking Wanderers XI and won 1 – 2. This 4th pre-season friendly was played on Saturday 16th July 2022. Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk. Reporter: Richard Lambert

A hot and sunny Meadowbank was the place to be for just over 80 spectators as our pre-season friendlies continued with a 2-1 win against a sort of Dorking Wanderers XI.

The opponents were billed as both an XI and a B team, but the advertising came from the Reserve team, so it's hard to tell exactly which team they were made up from. Clearly though they knew each other well and were extremely young and fit, with the keeper advising me that he was just 15!

And it has to be said our opponents held more of the ball in this encounter than we did, although we restricted them to just a couple of shots on target and when we had chances, we actually looked far more threatening than they did, with a former Epsom player being involved in most of our attacks.

Our first chance came in the 14th minute as a low ball in from Athan Smith-Joseph was just ahead of our man running in, but we took the lead a minute later after another former Epsom player intercepted the ball in midfield and spread the pass out to Smith-Joseph who cut onto his right foot and steered the ball into the far corner from just outside the penalty area. He then had another shot on target on the half hour, but it was unluckily blocked by a team mate.

We had a large drinks break and then followed it with an injury delay as our player who had created the goal fell awkwardly and had to be replaced. In all over nine minutes extra were played. We then made six more changes to the line up and changed our colours from blue and white to yellow and could have extended our lead after Josh Alder got through on goal, but his shot was saved comfortably and in the 49th minute the home side equalised with a close range shot that our keeper was unable to block.

Further changes followed throughout the match as the heat continued to beat down and a really good take down of a crossfield pass gave us another opportunity, but the shot went into the side netting. Fortunately that same player would get another chance in the 90th minute as he ran on to a good ball over the top of the defence and his close range finish gave the keeper no chance, and our first ever win at the rebuilt Meadowbank, albeit not for a competitive fixture.

But that will have to wait until the season commences as we are scheduled to visit here twice more, and on this display we have to assume that if this is the make up of the Dorking Wanderers Reserve side for this season then they will be right up there battling for the title too. Our side is still being tweaked with at this stage of the season though and I believe we will improve further before the season commences.

Our next two friendlies against Croydon and Leatherhead Youth have been cancelled, although the Croydon one has been moved to the following Tuesday, 26th July, and will now be played at Leatherhead instead. There may still be a friendly arranged for this coming Saturday, but based on the club's current poor release of information to its supporters, I doubt we will find much more out until just before the day, if indeed there is one at all.

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