

Epsom & Ewell FC mid-week loss



Horley Town 2-0 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League – Premier Division South. Tuesday 18th March.

We made some changes from our defeat at Tadley Calleva on Saturday as Kevin Kardel returned between the posts, with Toby Young in front of him in place of Stefan Aiwone, while Kionte Gillfillian-Waul came back in on the left, enabling Ethan Brazier to switch back to his natural right hand side and releasing Niall Stillwell to play further forward. Up front there was another surprise as Craig Dundas took on the centre-forward role ahead of the late arriving Carl Oblitey and Ali Fofahan came in ahead of Jason Bloor. However, for the second match in a row we went behind in the opening minutes.

It's one thing conceding early, but quite another to let a goal in that is easily preventable and in the fourth minute the ball was just pinged into the danger area from the left wing, where former Salt Will Kendall was waiting unmarked to guide a header past the helpless Kardel from fairly close range.

We then had a chance of our own two minutes later when a ball through towards Dundas came back off the Horley keeper George Hyde, rebounding kindly for our Player / Coach to get a shot in, but he hooked his left footed shot just over the bar from eight yards out. We didn't know it at the time, but our best chance had already gone.

Kardel had to punch away a dangerous delivery, but we were on the attack soon after where Luke Miller saw his shot blocked only for Brendan Murphy-McVey to strike his shot wide from a good position, and whilst it took a slight deflection on the way, the corner came to nothing.

The home side were creating more than us though and had a spell of corners, from which they extended their lead in the 31st minute after one wasn't cleared and Ben Senior's shot from ten yards ended up in the net via at least one deflection. Clearly our boys were unhappy with this, although it wasn't clear from where I was standing exactly what had gone on, but it must have been important as Anthony Nazareth protested to the extent that he found himself in the sin-bin for his comments.

We didn't suffer too much during this enforced absence and Adam Green came quite close with a superb strike from around twenty yards that dipped just over the Horley crossbar, but we could have no real complaints at the scoreline as the teams went in at the break with the home side two goals up.

We had been playing for just a couple of minutes after the restart when we really should have gone three goals behind. Another former Salt, Lewis Pearch, made tracks down the right and his delivery in found Kendall six yards out and completely unmarked, from where he lashed his shot against the frame of our goal; rebounding down and away off our crossbar. It was a lucky escape, but could we use this let off to get back into the match? Regrettably not, as we created little by way of a threat from this point. Miller set up Green for another powerful strike that was just wide of the top corner.

Oblitey came on as we went with an extra man up front and it took Horley a few minutes to come to terms with it, during which we nearly got a goal back when a clever ball over the top from Brendon Murphy-McVey put Dundas through, only to be denied by a well-timed challenge just as he was about to shoot. Oblitey sent a dribbler straight at Hyde before Sean-Michael Anderson and Conrad Essilfie-Conduah were introduced, but the pattern of the match remained unchanged and our final chance of the match came when Green's cross was headed wide by our final substitute Bloor. Seven minutes of injury time were played, but we were unable to reduce the deficit and the final whistle confirmed another loss for our boys.

We can look at this result in two ways. We can look at the eight straight defeats and feel sorry for ourselves, or we could take in the simple fact that despite the losses, a win on Saturday at home to Balham will guarantee our survival. A loss to Balham would leave them just one point behind us and make for an extremely nervy end to the season, but we can consign all that to the history books with a home victory. It's not much to ask, but it would require a significant improvement from our recent performances if we are to achieve that.

Epsom & Ewell: Kevin Kardel, Ethan Brazier, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Adam Green (c), Anthony Nazareth, Toby Young, Luke Miller, Niall Stillwell, Craig Dundas, Brendan Murphy-McVey, Ali Fofahan

Subs: Carl Oblitey for Fofahan (58), Sean-Michael Anderson for Miller (71), Conrad Essilfie-Conduah for Stillwell (79), Jason Bloor for Dundas (87)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk