



Reigatian Hoodoo Broken: Sutton and Epsom Scale the Heights

23 September 2025



Old Reigatian 14 Sutton and Epsom RFC 49. Saturday 20th September.

Sutton and Epsom may have enjoyed the better start to the campaign with two victories compared to their opponent's two defeats but Old Reigatian could be considered the Black and Whites' Kryptonite. Since resuming league hostilities in September 2023 the Old Boys have won all four encounters amassing 142 points and scoring 20 tries. So for Rugby Lane supporters the 49-14 win was a most welcome end to the historical hoodoo.

There was a welcome return to the ranks for Gareth O'Brien and Sam Lennie but hat-trick hero Rob Hegarty and Ben Tame were absentees from the Sutton and Epsom squad. There was also the reappearance of Eric Duey in the second row after an absence of biblical proportions of three seasons. Referee Pierce Young's whistle announced the next chapter in the Old Reigatian v Sutton and Epsom story. Sutton and Epsom were to enjoy the first half benefits of the slope and the wind. This was amply demonstrated when Tom Lennard seized a loose ball in his 22 and kicked over the OR line for a drop out in the early moments.

Sutton and Epsom's first chance came after five minutes with a 5-metre lineout. The ball was overthrown and devoured by the defence and the opportunity squandered. But Ewan McTaggart, wearing the temporary burden of captaincy lightly on his broad shoulders, charged down the clearance and with almost divine intervention it landed in Eric Duey's hands for the try. Tom Lennard added the extras for a 7-0 lead. The remainder of the first quarter was entertaining fare as expansive play was matched by dogged defence by all concerned. In the 20th minute Sutton and Epsom were held up over the line but Reigatian relief from the long clearance was fleeting. The ball was run back and Gareth O'Brien sidestepped his man near halfway and scorched home for a fine solo score. Tom Lennard extended the advantage to 14-0.



On the half hour the sizeable following support from Rugby Lane were applauding their third try. A 5-metre lineout appeared to have been superbly defended as the packs slid towards touch but Dan Jones erupted from the heaving masses to score. Tom Lennard maintained his kicking excellence for 21-0. Emboldened by their lead and with Lennard exploiting the slope with intelligent kicking Sutton and Epsom dominated territorially. The valiant home defence once more held up the Black and Whites over their line. Once more it was only a temporary respite. Kyren Ghumra ran the ball back and Sam Lennie saw a gap in a scrambling defence to touch down for the bonus point score. Lennard maintained his 100% record for 28-0.

There was still time for the visitors to add another score to their first period riches. It was arguably the best of the first half five. The forwards provided clean ball on the 22 and it was spun wide. Laurence Wise ran the perfect supporting line from Number 9 to collect an inside pass that opened up the defence and he sauntered home. The Lennard boot made it 35-0 and the referee concluded the half with Sutton and Epsom handsomely placed having made the most of the topography and meteorological assistance.

The hosts would enjoy the benefits of the slope and a strengthening wind. Even with their talented back division and their habitual winning of this fixture a 35-point deficit was considerable, perhaps not Everest but certainly Himalayan in proportions. Old Reigatian began the second half with great intent pegging back the visitors in their 22 and laying siege. It was one-way traffic with 5-metre penalties and lineouts accumulating as the Black and White line was put under the severest pressure. But courageous Sutton and Epsom defence repelled every attack.

Having survived the siege Sutton and Epsom scored on their first visit to their opponent's 22. The returning Sam Lennie brushed aside defenders in his usual imperious manner and passed to his fellow countryman Adam Bibby to score under the posts. Tom Lennard caressed over the conversion for 42-0. As the game entered the final quarter Sutton and Epsom faced disruption in their ranks. They lost Gareth O'Brien through injury and Adam Bibby through indiscretion. The former did not return but the latter reappeared after the mandatory 10-minute breather.

Finally, Old Reigatian scored a try that their efforts certainly warranted on an afternoon where the scoreboard did not reflect the nature of the contest. The score followed another period of sustained pressure. The ball was relayed to the left and Jonny Bridges manufactured the break and having been tackled stretched to the line to score. He celebrated his try with a finely struck conversion for 7-42. The weather deteriorated as the wind intensified. The Sutton and Epsom pack was now in the ascendancy but the Old Boys demonstrated immense character and were rewarded with a second try. Exploiting an retreating opposition the impressive Number 9 Max Nicol sniped with clinical efficiency to score. Bridges' kick made it 14-42 with five minutes left on the clock.

Sutton and Epsom had the final word with a magnificent seventh try. Steve Munford passed and looped near halfway to create an overlap. Agu Benson stormed down the touchline and passed to fellow flyer Kyren Ghumra who timed his pass to perfection for the ubiquitous Dan Jones to score triumphantly under the posts. The 100% Man, Tom Lennard, made it 49-14 and brought his personal tally to 14 points. In the dying moments a final Reigatian attack was thwarted by an interception near the Sutton and Epsom line to deny the hosts a consolation.

For the Black and Whites Tom Lennard had a first-rate afternoon, kicking superbly, whether tactically or bisecting the uprights, and marshalling a back division that impressed in defence and attack. The team



defended superbly and the seven tries reflected their attacking intent in a strong overall display. Old Reigatian are in transition with the departure of familiar faces but they should take heart from their defence and resilience from the first to the last minute. Their backs were slick with ball in hand and will pose a threat to all teams. Max Nicol at 9 has the quality to get the best out of the backs and their collective passion and hard work in defence will provide a solid platform for improved results.

The league has a Saturday off whilst England play Canada for the World Cup. The competition returns on October 4th when Sutton and Epsom host Old Colfeians at Rugby Lane.

Sutton and Epsom: O'Brien, Benson, Scott, Bibby, Ghumra, Lennard, Wise, Johnson, Lennie, Mount, McTaggart (c), Duey, Rea, Jones and Finney. Reps: Boaden, Fitzgerald and Munford.

Old Reigatian: Woodford, Coyle, Parker, Allen (c), Bridges, Holder, Nicol, Garrec, Marshall, Collister, Grant, Jones, Blackburn, Brooks C. and Niven. Reps: Lee, Brooks O. and Flynn.

John Croysdill

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