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Salts beaten by ten men

13 March 2025

Guildford City 1-0 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League – Premier Division South. Wednesday 12th March.

We made the short journey to the Spectrum Football Ground on Wednesday to play out a 1-0 loss against Guildford who, despite having a player sent off just before half time, proved to be the better team over the 90 minutes.

The game started slowly with neither side really taking control in the opening 20 minutes, although Guildford registered their first shots which both went wide. The first shot on target for either team came in the 33rd minute when we lost the ball on the right flank in our own half, and after a poor clearance the ball came back in and was headed weakly to Sami Nabbad in goal for a simple catch.

This brought a small patch of intensity to the game for the next five minutes as Guildford had a shot from the edge of the box which ricocheted off the outside of our near post. It was now our turn to attack, which we did with good passing on the left wing between Luke Miller and Kionte Gillfillian-Waul who crossed for Jason Bloor to miss narrowly to the Guildford keeper Jacob Terry's right.

Almost on the stroke of half-time, a ball forward was claimed outside of the box by Terry under pressure from Bloor. This was deemed to be worthy of a red card by the ref after a brief discussion with his assistant which meant that Guildford would have to play the second half with ten men and that Alex Stingelin would replace Terry in goal as well.

Although Guildford had shaded the first half, having more possession and shots, I felt that we had the better chance in the second half with the man advantage. Our first impact in the second half was through a free kick that we were awarded after Bloor was fouled about 25 yards out. Miller took the free kick and it was saved low to Stingelin's right.

Their goal came in the 62nd minute when Darrell Jon-Peter spotted Nabbad off his line and lobbed the ball over him from 40 yards. This was one of their first decent chances of the half and also one of their last as we created more chances with the extra player. We made our first substitution at that time with Sean-Michael Anderson coming on for Niall Stillwell who had been given 60 minutes as a right winger.

We had another good chance on the 70-minute mark when Adam Green played a deep ball into the box which led to a shot that was deflected onto the bar and over. In the next 10 minutes we had good chances that weren't taken as we had two shots and two corners that didn't test Stingelin in goal

We made two more subs with Anthony Nazareth and Conrad Essilfie-Conduah replacing Stefan Aiwone and Craig Dundas respectively. We then needed to make a fourth substitution as a result of a high tackle on Nicholas Bostan who made way for Toby Young to make his first appearance in months after injury. The challenge earnt itself a yellow card for Jon-Peter although a fan who was much closer than me said that he should have seen red for it.

From this point on we recorded several chances throughout the resultant ten additional minutes, with some shots on target and a couple that missed by a fair distance. We finished the stronger side but it wasn't enough to score against a defensively strong Guildford side who definitely earnt their clean sheet from this game.

So where does this leave us? We are still in 18th place after our loss, four points clear of Balham with four games in hand. As we have played the joint lowest number of games in the league this season, we could still mathematically finish anywhere between 6th and 20th but with our last six games all being lost we are in bad form which must change.

Epsom & Ewell: Sami Nabbad, Ethan Brazier, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Adam Green (c), Stefan Aiwone, Nicolas Bostan, Niall Stillwell, Craig Dundas, Carl Oblitey, Jason Bloor, Luke Miller

Subs: Sean-Michael Anderson for Stillwell (63), Anthony Nazareth for Aiwone (78), Conrad Essilfie-Conduah for Dundas (81), Toby Young for Bostan (89)

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