EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Sutton and Epsom rugby away win

26 January 2025



SIDCUP 24 SUTTON & EPSOM RFC 34. Saturday 25th January. Crescent Farm has produced a bounteous harvest this season with a maximum crop yield of 35 points from a magnificent seven wins. In addition, last season's visit by Sutton and Epsom was seen by many levelheaded observers as the nadir of that campaign. Originally planned for January 18th, before the intervention of Jack Frost, this fixture came with the usual proviso of a rescheduled match: Who is available? In a quality encounter, Sutton and Epsom, playing their best rugby of the season, inflicted the first home defeat of the season on Sidcup by 34-24.

The Black & Whites welcomed back Messrs Johnson & Lennie to the front row union but were bereft of the veteran Munford and Number 8 Rob Hegarty who had scored a hat trick against Old Tiffinians the previous Saturday. Job 1:21 springs to mind. The hosts kicked off in glorious sunshine on a windless afternoon. S&E were swiftly into their stride opening their account after a few minutes. Freddy Bunting kicked a penalty to the 22 where Ewan McTaggart obliged with clean lineout ball. A dominant carry by Josh Glanville set up the backs and slick passing resulted in a Gareth O'Brien dummy and a try. Captain Bunting converted from the flank for 7-0. Sutton now demonstrated vastly improved kicking from hand with the highlight being a sublime 50-22 from Tom Lennard. Sidcup have conceded the least points by any club in the league this season so excellent defence was expected. A second try was denied but they came back for a penalty that Freddy Bunting nonchalantly converted for 10-0.

The home team hit back with multiple phases and great intent. Deep in the Sutton 22 they had a free ball and looked to cross the whitewash. It was the turn of the Surrey men to defend valiantly and the Kent team to have the consolation of a penalty. Josh Twyford obliged to trail by 3-10. It had been a thrilling start but the best was still to come. On the quarter hour Sutton produced their try of the season. The forwards carried with pace and conviction with Sam Lennie and Josh Glanville making gains. The ball was then passed along the backs with pace and precision to exploit an overlap, and winger Finlay Scott ran in untouched from near halfway. Freddy Bunting's conversion extended the advantage to 17-3 at the end of an inspired first quarter.

Sidcup fought hard to get back into the game but not only was S&E tackling first rate but also the coverage of the host's kicking game was most efficient. Another penalty gave Freddy Bunting the chance to put the Crescent Farm team into the corner. The lineout was secured but all momentum appeared to have dissipated, and the drive was halted. Sutton lost yards and were recycling the ball on the 22 when Number 9 Laurence Wise dummied at the ruck and made a clean break. Ben Tame's fine support run was rewarded with his try under the posts. A simple conversion added to the burgeoning Bunting account for the season for 24-3 on the half hour.

There was no easing off from the visitors. Playing with a high tempo combining powerful carrying from the pack and astute kicking from the backs, the hosts were forced to defend in their 22. With normal time nearly complete, winger Matt Symonds picked up a loose ball near touch as Sidcup tried to break out. The ball arrived at the Brobdingnagian lock Ewan McTaggart who strode towards glory only to be denied by courageous cover. Despite two 5-metre penalties under the posts, and Sidcup being reduced to 14 when Ben Ibrahim saw yellow for an additional 10-minute siesta, the visitors failed to extend their lead. S&E had replaced their front row in its entirety as Gibson, Hilton and Howes came off the bench, but despite these fresh legs the first period ended with no further addition to the scoreboard that read 24-3 to Sutton and Epsom.

Winning at home has not only become a habit but it is the norm for Sidcup this term. Sutton may have excelled in the first half with a comfortable lead at the break but all those present were expecting the hosts to raise their game. Still with the numerical advantage, the second half began where the first had left off with the Black & Whites besieging the home line after the Bunting restart was dropped on the 22 gifting S&E a scrum. Sweeping attacks, superb defence and the usual penalty kicked to the corner. However, there was variety as Sutton erred with an accidental offside followed by a Sidcup infringement on their put-in and culminating with S&E giving away a penalty at the ruck when in prime position. Would the visitors rue their failure to secure the fourth try either side of the break?

In the third quarter, Sutton and Epsom were forced into demonstrating their defensive qualities. They were assisted by a lack of discipline by the hosts. After a 5-metre lineout had been neutered, Sidcup had the consolation of a scrum under the posts. Not only did they concede a penalty but in addition a quizzical comment saw them retreat ten metres more a second time. The cacodoxy in rugby is to argue with the referee. The second 10-metre forced march for Sidcup hinted at an outbreak of logorrhoea from a certain quarter and Mr Pedro Diogo would not tolerate the dissentient voices. Finally, the hosts made their possession, territory, and pressure count. The popular combination of a penalty, kick to the corner and the catch & drive try. Replacement Harry Large was the beneficiary of the fine forward effort. The reliable boot of

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

Josh Twyford added the extras and optimism swept through Crescent Farm as their team trailed 10-24.

Sutton reintroduced Lennie and Johnson for Howes and Hilton. The gains from the Sidcup goal were quickly negated by another penalty which gave Freddy Bunting the opportunity to extend the lead to 27-10. From the restart the Rugby Lane men tried to run it out of their 22 but knocked on. From the scrum the hosts took full advantage as the forwards carried deep into the 22 before centre Sam Leek's astute line of running saw him touchdown by the uprights. Josh Twyford made it 27-17 and the comeback was on. Ewan McTaggart then received a yellow card at the restart and suddenly the game took on an entirely new complexion. An emboldened Sidcup threw everything at the visitors and looked favourites to add another quick score. However, credit to the character of this current S&E vintage. They rallied, scrapped for every ball and were defensively dogged.

The decisive blow came with ten minutes to go and the Black & Whites still with 14. A loose ball was picked up by prop Dan Johnson. There is no more popular sight in rugby than a prop forward on the charge. This was a classic with an impressively high knee-lift he set off like a Highland warrior eager to decapitate an Englishman and bearing an expression of deranged ferocity as he covered the 40 metres to score unchallenged under the posts for a memorable first try for Sutton. Freddy Bunting chipped over the easiest of conversions for a 34-17 lead and a bonus point.

Returning to their full complement, the Black & Whites doubled down defensively and looked to control territory. A penalty was kicked to the 22 was followed by a fine grubber by Tom Lennard and the hosts were stuck deep in their own half. The game entered time added on and the deficit was too great but credit to Sidcup as they kept pressing. The Crescent Farm crowd were rewarded when their team scored their third try of the afternoon. A penalty was kicked into the corner and from the ideal platform of the 5-metre lineout they crossed the whitewash. Josh Twyford being presented with the close-range try after the hard yards from the forwards. He added the conversion for 24-34. There was just time for one more play but there was to be no further addition to the scoreboard and Sutton recorded a notable scalp winning away 34-24.

Without doubt, this was the performance of the season that has included fine wins over the table toppers at Rugby Lane on three separate occasions. It was a wonderful team effort from 1 to 18 with the forwards providing quality ball and the backs playing with a fluency not previously seen. Laurence Wise at 9 had an exceptional game for a man with only a handful of caps. The kicking game was unrecognisable from recent times, the defence was back to its high standards but it was the tempo and continuity that really caught the eye. It needed a performance of this nature to defeat a Sidcup XV that has made Crescent Farm a fortress this season.

Next week, the Sutton charabanc heads to Medway who will be looking to redress the balance. They arrived at Rugby Lane in October in pole position and returned with a 28-24 defeat.

Sutton and Epsom: O'Brien, Symonds, Bibby, Bunting ©, Scott, Lennard, Wise, Johnson, Lennie, Boaden, Glanville, McTaggart, Rea, Jones & Tame. Replacements: Hilton, Gibson & Howes.

Sidcup: Ellison, Sheridan, Leek, McMahon, Keeley, Twyford, Ibrahim, Conlon, Fordham, Carmen, Epps, Evans, Williams, Healey & West. Replacements: Gibbons, Large & Masters.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY