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

5th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Sutton & Epsom RFC just fail to mount comeback

21 January 2025

SUTTON & EPSOM RFC 42 OLD TIFFINIANS 46. Saturday 18th January. *Sutton and Epsom* started this campaign with a rollicking runaway win over Old Colfeians.

Since then the Rugby Lane crowd has enjoyed an overwhelming diet of tense, low scoring affairs with defensive defiance the common theme. The avalanche of points in the 48-43 loss to Old Reigatian being very much the statistical outlier. However, a glance at the reverse fixture, a 41-19 Tiffinians triumph, and the bonus point penchant of OTs perhaps gave a hint to another Old Boy try-fest. In a seesaw encounter of thirteen tries the visitors edged it 46-42.

Sutton and Epsom kicked off with prop **Alex Mount** celebrating his 100th league appearance and desperate to eviscerate the memory of that chastening October loss. The opening salvoes were fast and furious with both sides hinting that it would be an entertaining afternoon on a favourable surface with minimal elemental interference. After ten minutes an accidental offside from a lineout offered Freddy Bunting the chance to peg the Old Boys back into their 22. This initiated an all-out assault as the forwards looked to open the scoring against a resilient Tiffinian defence. Ironically on this red-letter day for the centurion it was the ultimate unsung hero, Josh Glanville, who took the best supporting Oscar with the opening try on his 50th appearance. The stalwart second row is worth many a verse of praise as he is always at the heart of the action doing the less glamorous hard work that is much admired by not only his teammates but also the supporters. Bunting added the extras for a reassuring 7-0 lead.

Five minutes later the hosts had doubled their advantage. Benefiting from two quick-fire penalties the Black & Whites were gifted a 5-metre lineout in the corner. With commendable precision and control the forwards ushered Rob Hegarty over the line. If Sutton and Epsom had started with the single-minded determination to redress the balance from the unpalatable defeat at Summer Avenue then their opponents demonstrated admirable sangfroid. As Bunting prepared to make it 14 zip there were no splenetic recriminations under the posts but just a calm assessment from Captain Hobbs that they were playing well. Little did we know that we had the heir to Nostradamus in our midst.

There followed a remarkable twenty minutes. To describe it as a reversal of fortunes would be a grotesque understatement. It was a tectonic shift of cataclysmic proportions that altered the landscape of Rugby Lane with 29 unanswered points from a rampant Old Tiffinians. It started with some familiar ineffective kick tennis followed by a couple of penalties conceded by the hosts. The visitors pressed hard and the livewire scrum half Matt Fowler collected the first of his trio of tries. The touchline conversion failed and 5-14. Sutton and Epsom seemed to shrug off this aberration with a promising attack from a tapped penalty but good work was undermined by poor handling. Tiffs next incursion in the home 22 saw winger Segun splendidly exploit a Sutton and Epsom error with a stylish finish. The touchline conversion struck the crossbar and went over for 12-14. The comfortable cushion had deflated to a miserly 2-point advantage.

An emboldened opposition were certainly not finished. More penalties ceded territory, more errors were punished and two more tries followed in the next five minutes. Matt Fowler was the major beneficiary as his excellent support play and eye for the tryline saw him complete a first period hat trick. Coach Blackburn must have been delighted at the response of his charges with the high tempo play, slick passing and a lethal awareness that led to four clinical finishes and a 26-14 lead. With the interval approaching Sutton and Epsom conceded another penalty in front of their posts but with the 4-try bonus point already securely banked Sharif Dougramaji took the three points meaning that Sutton and Epsom required three scores as now they trailed 29-14.

In time added on in the first half the home crowd urged their team to respond. Captain Bunting perhaps motivated by an understandable despair at the horrific turn of events adopted the motto of the suffragettes: “Deeds not Words”. He set off on a stunning break combining pace, power and changes of direction before being halted in the OT 22 and gaining a penalty. With the lineout operating like a metronome the kick was declined in favour of the 5-metre lineout. With the throw safely secured Sutton and Epsom advanced to the line. Desperate defence could not stop the drive and Mr Maynard spotted skulduggery and trotted under the posts to award a penalty try. The whistle blew to conclude a breathless 50-point first half with Tiffinians 29-21 to the good.

Sutton and Epsom opened the second period on the front foot and despite missing an early opportunity to cross the whitewash they were given a second chance with a prior indiscretion. The supporters waited in anxious anticipation for the 5-metre lineout. Once again the forwards delivered and Rob Hegarty had his second score and Sutton and Epsom had the bonus point. The reliability of the lineout was rivalling the Bunting boot that made it 28-29. The penalty count mounted against the visitors. Five minutes later Sutton and Epsom faced the familiar question: Take the simple three points or go for the maximum? Their positive approach and the excellence of the lineout gave Rob Hegarty his hat trick. Freddy Bunting impressed once more with a touchline conversion and the Black & Whites had regained the lead 35-29 but there was still 30 minutes on the clock.

© 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

The restart should be a moment to refocus and heighten one's concentration. Sadly Sutton and Epsom reacted in statuesque fashion to the kick. To compound this error they conceded a completely unnecessary penalty for a high tackle on a man in the maul. For the umpteenth time the ball arrowed into the corner from a penalty. This time there was some variation on the theme as the ball was shipped wide to the backs. The Sutton and Epsom focus on the catch and drive left an overlap and Sharif Dougramaji bulldozed his way over the line. The centre converted his try and the pendulum swung back in Old Tiffinians favour as they led 36-35.

Ineffectual kicking and penalties now haunted Sutton and Epsom as the Old Boys were in the ascendancy. They declined a simple penalty in front of the posts in search of another try. There was a return to the popular catch and drive theme as Number 8 Jaewon Jang completed the score. The missed conversion left Sutton and Epsom trailing by 35-41 knowing a goal would inch them ahead. Moments later and it was roles reversed. Sutton and Epsom had the penalty and another lineout opportunity. Once more the excellent throwing in by Alex Mount found its mark. The home pack bullied their way to the line and prop Callum Gibson scored from a couple of centimetres out. The highly lubricated crowd roared their approval as the Bunting conversion sailed over and his side led 42-41 with ten to go.

It was the traditional tense ending for the assembled crowd as has become the norm at Rugby Lane but that certainly did not ease the tension. Errors and infringements far outnumbered moments of quality as all involved knew that the next score might be the decider. As the hosts ran the ball from just outside their 22 disaster struck as a pass was intercepted. Sharif Dougramaji kept his composure and scored lucky try number 13 in the match. However, once again he failed with the conversion and with the OTs leading 46-42 Sutton and Epsom required a try to lead. In the in-goal area a disconsolate and exhausted Alex Mount left the field having given his all. He may not have scored a try but his excellent lineout service had provided a remarkable six tries for his pack.

There was to be no last gasp glory and Old Tiffinians held on to complete the double over Sutton and Epsom. The hosts' errors had been costly but great credit to the visitors who pounced on every opportunity and did not squander a chance all game. Hat trick hero Matt Fowler exemplified their ruthless streak and the first half purple patch was the foundation of their success. Rob Hegarty joins the illustrious trio of Will East (Luton), Kyren Ghumra (Shelford) and Ollie Baptiste-Wilson (Royal Wootton Bassett) who have scored a hat trick in the league for Sutton and Epsom in a losing cause. The match was a curious affair because there was much to applaud in the Sutton and Epsom performance but their demise was the result of self-inflicted wounds that were deep and proved to be fatal. Next Saturday sees the visit to Sidcup to play the fixture that was recently frozen off. There can be no doubt about not only the severity of the task but also that the hosts will be equally unforgiving if the Black & Whites repeat such an error-strewn performance.

Sutton and Epsom:
O'Brien, Scott, Bibby, Bunting ©, Rea, Lennard, Munford, Mount, Boaden, Gibson, Glanville, McTaggart, Tame, Jones & Hegarty.
Replacements: Hilton, Davies & Wise.

Old Tiffinians:
Day, Segun, Dougramaji, Sabania, Marshall, Taylor, Fowler, Hobbs ©, Blackman, Turner, O'Connell, Noeh, Dore, Graham & Jang.
Replacements: Oram, Turnbull & Burgess.

© 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